

Price 12 1/2 cts.

REPLY

TO

THE LETTER OF

HON. J. W. JOHNSTON,

JUDGE IN EQUITY

UNDER JOHNSTON'S COMPLAINT WAS "Printed for Private Circulation only," and it has been circulated through the Churches, generally, and among all denominations. It is supposed to be printed with much care, and to be a copy of the Reply to him of 1868. This is a copy of the same printed, as well as for the purpose of giving notice to members of the Churches concerning the Baptist Association.

PAID BY

PRINTED AT DODGES STEAM PRESS

1868.

17141
REPLY

OF THE

Granville St. Baptist Church,

HALIFAX,

TO THE

LETTER ADDRESSED TO THEM

BY

THE HON. J. W. JOHNSTON,

Judge in Equity.

HALIFAX:

PRINTED AT BARNES' STEAM PRESS.

1862

F5012

1868

G762

TO THE CHURCHES COMPRISING THE
NOVA-SCOTIA CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

AND

TO THE BAPTISTS OF

Nova-Scotia, New Brunswick, & Prince Edward Island.

THE HON. JUDGE JOHNSTON having published and widely circulated a letter addressed to us, we think it proper to place before you our reply. We have also published, for your information, an appendix containing the documentary history of our proceedings relative to our late Pastor.

We do not lay our reply before you simply to vindicate ourselves. We regard it as an imperative duty to uphold and maintain certain principles long held and acted upon by Baptists, to which, we think, Judge Johnston has done violence in his "act of formal separation" from us.

It may be thought that we should have published the evidence placed before the Council; but, as a fair reply to Judge Johnston's letter did not render it imperative to deal to any great extent with it, and as it is itself of such a character that its publication would not be likely to advance the interests of morality, we have deemed it best to withhold it. You will, however, be able to judge from the history of our proceedings, as contained in the appendix, whether we have acted under the influence of prejudice and inflamed passions, as has been charged against us.

On behalf of the Church,

B. H. EATON, *Clerk.*]

REPLY.

HONORABLE J. W. JOHNSTON,
JUDGE IN EQUITY.

SIR,—The letter you have sent us demands a reply at our hands.

We regret that you have thought it proper to send us such a communication. We regret that all our doings, with scarcely an exception, have incurred your displeasure. We regret that you hold the erroneous views of Baptist Church polity which you propound. We regret that one so long associated with us as a member and office-bearer, should have a desire to leave us. We regret that you have thought it proper to impute very improper motives to us. The object of our reply will be to convince you that our proceedings have not been such as to justify your condemnation, but that if we have made mistakes, (and we do not claim to be infallible), the whole course of our action is inconsistent with the supposition that we have acted from the improper motives you attribute to us. It will be our duty to correct the more important errors into which we think you have fallen, to acknowledge our own errors, so far as we are conscious of them, and to uphold and maintain certain fundamental principles to which we think you have done violence.

Our reply will necessarily lead us through most of the acts of the Church relative to their late Pastor, and will allow us no space, if we desired any, to do more than notice, in passing, the harsh words and harsh epithets you have used. These, indeed, could not be answered except by recrimination. We have seldom, if ever, read a production so studded with harsh forms of speech—Here are a few examples: “defiant rejection,” “dishonorable, unjust, and unchristian conduct,” “a despotism so ruthless,” “insidiously affects,” “revolting malignity,” “self-conceit, inflamed by pride, obstinate in self-will,” “vindictive and spiteful temper,” “acrimonious hostility,” “rancorous enmity,” “steeped in the venom of hate and pride.” These are hard words, and such as even we, who listened forbearingly for months to similar expressions

which fell from your lips in the warmth of debate, are surprised to meet with in a document prepared in the quiet of your study—a document in which you are giving your reasons for wishing to separate from those with whom you have, for so many years, walked as brethren and sisters. We decline to answer with such words. We think of the Archangel's language reported by Jude, verse 9. We have ever striven to heed the advice of Paul to the Ephesians "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice."

Nor shall we have space, and, indeed, it is foreign to the object of this letter, to consider your references to individuals. You have very unwarrantably dragged into your letter a large amount of vituperative matter with which we have no connection whatever. We are not responsible for the management of the *Christian Messenger*. Whether Bro. Selden has conducted the controversy with the Rev. I. E. Bill wisely, or unwisely, is no concern of ours as a Church, whatever opinion individual members may hold respecting it. This only is to be remembered, that Mr. Bill was the aggressor. If he had not published an inaccurate account of the proceedings of the late Council, the controversy between him and Brother Selden would not have taken place. But, as we said before, *we* have nothing to do with it.

Nor are we called upon to deal with your references to Cambridge matters. These were never before the Church. We never accused our late Pastor of misconduct in Cambridge. The reports abroad concerning his conduct there, never came before this Church; and the time spent by Dr. Crawley before the Council in producing testimony to Dr. Pryor's purity of life and usefulness in Cambridge, was time spent in endeavouring to falsify accusations never made or entertained at any of our meetings.

Passing by these things, then, we shall review the action of the Church throughout all our proceedings concerning our late Pastor, and give our reasons for the course taken by us, noticing your complaints and errors as we proceed.

In 1862 Dr. Pryor became Pastor of Granville Street Church, and continued to hold that office till May, 1867. He was a member of the Church from March 1st, 1867, to September 24th, 1867. Up to the 25th of April last, this Church was not cognizant of wrong conduct on the part of their Pastor. Here and there a member, indeed, had heard rumors for months back derogatory to his character, but believed they had no foundation in fact, and dismissed them from their minds, and it was afterwards known that some members of the congregation had

absented themselves from our meetings on account of such rumors ; but on the morning of the 24th of April an event took place, which came upon us like a sudden clap of thunder, and in a moment threw upon us the performance of the most distressing duties. Early in the morning of that day our Pastor was caught coming from a house in Pleasant Street, where he had been staying in the depth of night, for about two hours, with a young woman not of good repute, and whose husband was abroad. She was not a member of any church, but had been excluded from a Baptist Church in Boston, and seldom attended any place of worship. This event, with its attendant circumstances, was soon known throughout the city.

Here the record begins. You know how stunned and shocked the Church was on learning these things. You know how all the city was ablaze with the matter, when on the 26th, at the instance of three of the Deacons, who had agreed with Dr. Pryor to call a meeting, we met, hoping to hear such explanations from our Pastor as would satisfy the Church of his innocence ; but being disappointed in this, we were then compelled to commence the discharge of the grave duties thus suddenly thrown upon us. You know what a whirlwind of damaging reports was going through all the streets of the city.

Now, at this point, what was the clear duty of Granville Street Church? What we did was this. We listened to Dr. Pryor's explanations. With his perfect concurrence we appointed committees to investigate the evil reports abroad concerning his character, charging them to use all diligence in their work. Thus far, we believe, our proceedings have not incurred your condemnation. But here a step was taken which you regard as "harsh and unjust."

After Dr. Pryor had retired from this meeting, the brethren consulted together and concluded that it would be inexpedient that Dr. Pryor should occupy the pulpit on the coming Sabbath, and requested Deacon Selden, to communicate with Dr. Pryor, and after consultation to invite Rev. Mr. Welton to preach. You are not correct in saying that the reason assigned for this course, was that some members of the Church, and congregation were so excited, that if he officiated, they would leave the Meeting House, if you mean that that was the only or the chief reason. There were other reasons assigned. Some said that Dr. Pryor would not wish to preach, others that he ought not, some said they could not listen to him with profit, others that few would go to hear him. We certainly understood from yourself, at the time, that

it would be inexpedient that he should preach, but that the arrangement should be so effected as to secure harmony.

But we ask you, if it was right for you to suppose that this arrangement was dictated by unfriendliness to Dr. Pryor? To us, the only wonder is, that he himself did not at once propose a temporary withdrawal from the pulpit. Do you not think that a sense of delicacy and propriety would have led to that proposal? That a minister of the gospel, should himself desire to occupy the sacred desk, when charges of the gravest character affecting him, were under investigation, is to us unaccountable. How could a minister placed in these circumstances, hope to win a gainsaying world to purity and holiness? Had it been a case where the minister could have given an indignant denial to alleged facts, another course might perhaps have been adopted. But in this case, the minister acknowledges that he had spent two hours in the depth of night, alone with a young woman, against whose character he had heard evil reports, and which reports (as the woman herself testifies) he was discussing with her during those hours. When leaving this woman, on the night in question, he acknowledges that instead of meeting Mr. Baxter face to face, as an honest man on an honest mission should have done, he sought to elude him, and when arrested, betrayed by his language and manner, a consciousness of grievous impropriety. Such a suspension of duties would be insisted on, during the investigation of alleged misconduct of an official for instance, in a bank or post office; "and shall we listen to the slander" that secular departments have a greater desire to preserve public confidence than a Church?

You have made several misstatements under this head. One of the gravest is this—"A letter was sent to inform Dr. Pryor that his pulpit would be filled by another minister." Fortunately we possess a copy of the document sent, and the reply. They are as follows:—

Saturday Morning.

REV. DR. PRYOR:

My Dear Sir,—After you left the room last evening, the brethren came to the conclusion, that in the present state of affairs, it would not be right to tax you to fill the pulpit to-morrow. With your concurrence, therefore, we propose to get Mr. Welton. Have the goodness to reply per bearer.

Yours very truly,

S. SELDEN.

REPLY.

Dear Br.,—Whatever the brethren decided upon, I of course consent to. It seems, however, not exactly in accordance with usual custom. Will it not look as if my brethren thought me guilty?

Yours truly,

JOHN PRYOR.

Mr. Welton was not communicated with until after this answer was received. In the light of these written documents, what can you mean by "the rejection of the proposal to consult Dr. Pryor before acting"? He was consulted, and was told what was "proposed" to be done with his "concurrence." Surely, surely, there was nothing in this which called for "severe animadversion." You say the consequences of exclusion from the pulpit, were "cruel and unjust to Dr. Pryor in the extreme." You say, that abroad guilt was "universally inferred," and in evidence of this you allude to what Mrs. Pryor's servant told her. We do not believe that this cessation of pulpit duties created the impression abroad that the Church had decided upon Dr. Pryor's guilt. Certainly such an impression was unwarranted.

From the day of their appointment to the 10th of May, the two committees spent a great deal of time in the investigation of the reports abroad in the city. On that day both committees were ready to report. The committee on the immorality case presented their report on that day, and you concurred in receiving it; and you advocated and voted for a resolution, founded on that report, and on Dr. Pryor's own statements, to put an end to his pastoral relations with us, which resolution you had also assisted in maturing. The committee's report consisted of the evidence which they had gathered from a number of witnesses. Now, you strongly object to the manner in which this evidence was taken, and say that it was "utterly worthless—worthless judicially, and essentially worthless"—because taken in the absence of the accused. We might answer you here by reminding you again, that you yourself acted upon this evidence, and advocated and voted for a resolution expressing a "conviction that Dr. Pryor's indiscretion had been so great, as appears by the evidence and by his own statements," as to destroy all hopes of his future usefulness as our Pastor. Yes, you actually helped to mature that resolution, and yet it was based in large part upon evidence which you say was "utterly worthless." With your knowledge of the force of written documents, how do you excuse yourself in doing Dr. Pryor this great injustice? But we do not seek to justify our course in this way. We are not willing to justify ourselves by your approval or concurrence. We wish to stand justified on higher grounds.

What are the facts? The committee had to trace a multitude of rumors and reports to their sources. This necessitated visits to many parts of the city, and inquiries from many persons. It did not occur to the committee that Dr. Pryor would wish, while the city was so excited with the scandal, to accompany them in their visits from place to place,

day after day, nor did the committee receive any intimation of such a wish on the part of Dr. Pryor, until several days after their appointment. On the contrary, Dr. Pryor said in the presence of two members of the committee, on Saturday, the day succeeding their appointment, "For my own part, I do not see what there is for your committee to do. A few silly rumors are afloat, but I meet every-body on the street just as I ever did. I know no difference." On May 6th, however, Dr. Pryor inquired of one of the members of the committee, if they wished him to meet with them at Mrs. Maxner's. In reply, he was informed that the committee had no wish in the matter, but if he desired to be present, the committee, no doubt, would be pleased to have him. He stated that if the committee wanted him he would be at the office of —, and it was arranged to notify him, but the witness being absent at the time appointed, her evidence was subsequently taken in Dr. Pryor's absence. From these statements, it is evident that Dr. Pryor himself was not very anxious to follow the committee. When the evidence had been taken it was read over to Dr. Pryor, and the committee then stated that if it contained anything that was false, they would arrange that he should meet any of those who had made statements. Dr. Pryor declined to meet any of these persons, giving as his reason that he supposed the committee had already formed their opinions. This, surely, was not a very good reason, since five members formed but a small portion of the Church, and could not of themselves decide the question. But, then, the committee at once told Dr. Pryor that they did not intend to express any opinion. They would simply report the evidence to the Church. He still declined to meet any of the witnesses. At Deacon Nutting's the evidence was again read over in Dr. Pryor's presence. At the meeting of the Church, on May 10th, the evidence was again read over. Dr. Pryor complained that it had been taken in his absence. Upon this, some members rose and proposed that, if Dr. Pryor was not willing to be judged on that evidence, or if any mistake had been made by the committee, the Church should pause before taking another step, and that what could be done should be done to remove any cause of complaint; and that the witnesses, if required, should be brought forward for cross-examination. But this proposal met no response from Dr. Pryor. Had he then said, I want to meet my accusers face to face, there cannot be a doubt but that the Church would most readily have acceded to his request. Failing to take advantage of these opportunities to cross-examine the witnesses, what possible grounds of complaint remained?

But, then, why did not you, acting, as you did, the part of Dr. Pryor's advocate instead of that of a member of the Church, why did you not, before voting, plead with all your might for a thorough cross-examination of the witnesses? You knew what an opportunity the written statements of these witnessess would afford a skilful cross-examiner of testing their reliability, and you should have sought that opportunity. But why did you vote for the resolution of May 10th? If the evidence was "utterly worthless," did you, in acting upon it, act faithfully towards your Pastor or the cause of truth? Was that resolution stronger than it should have been? Then you wronged Dr. Pryor. Was that resolution more favorable to your Pastor than it should have been? Then you were neglecting the cause of truth.

You have, however, given us some clue to your action. You say, you agreed to the resolution "upon the express statement of Mr. Selden and Dr. Parker, that guilt was not imputed in relation to the charge of immorality, and upon the necessarily implied understanding that the charge was thus finally disposed of." It seems a little strange that you should agree to a resolution upon the statements of two out of a large number who were to pass upon that resolution. The "written document" ought surely to speak for itself, and verbal statements of members could not change its meaning.

Again, you speak of "violating the conditions upon which my assent had been induced." What! do you vote for or against resolutions "upon conditions?" Do you barter in these solemn matters? We are at a loss to understand what else your language means. If in your conscience, you thought that resolution was "unjust, injurious and uncharitable," and ought not to have passed, no consideration should have induced you to vote for it.

This resolution passed, you voting for it. Up to this date, no desire was expressed to the Church, either by Dr. Pryor, or yourself for the intervention of a Council. But we will refer to that matter again.

On the 17th of May, the Church met again, and the report of the financial committee was read, and also a letter from Dr. Pryor accompanying it, and these with a further written statement from Dr. Pryor, were discussed during that evening, and on the evenings of May 24th, 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th, On the last evening named, the resolution was passed, suspending Dr. Pryor from church-fellowship until he should explain what seemed to point only to guilt.

Before that resolution passed, you moved for a Council of *ministers* to consider the financial matters only. Eight voted for, and twelve

against your resolution. From the expressions made before the vote was taken, by some who voted against your resolution, you cannot doubt that a majority would have voted for a Council, if both matters had been included in your motion.

Here again, you strongly object to our action. Dr. Pryor had been condemned you say upon evidence that was "utterly worthless," and from the influence of which he "still suffers;" and yet you condemn us for desiring to afford an excellent opportunity of bringing these witnesses to the trying test of cross-examination, and demonstrating the worthlessness of their testimony. If our Pastor had suffered, if truth had suffered, from our vote and your vote, on hearing that evidence read, surely, surely, you ought not only to have rejoiced in, but to have sought an opportunity to relieve the sufferer.

For ourselves, we considered the two cases too closely related to each other to be satisfactorily investigated separately; and it was evident that when a council was convened they took a similar view of the matter, inasmuch as they deferred a review of the evidence and their decision, until all the evidence on both charges had been placed before them. Of course, the two charges are very different in their nature, but, then, if it was found that the conduct of the accused in one case tallied with that in the other, you will see that it would be of great assistance to a council to consider both cases at the same time. For example, to a council on the financial matter only, it would be difficult to show what became of the missing funds without going into the immorality case; and to a council on the latter it would be difficult to understand how Dr. Pryor, with a minister's salary, could be in a position so frequently to bestow alleged charities upon Mrs. McMillan. It would be an unsatisfactory thing for a council to decide upon one branch only of a minister's conduct, and to leave his conduct in other branches open to debate—unsatisfactory, we should suppose, to all concerned. When Dr. Pryor went to the Association, it was recommended that both matters should be submitted to a council. And you should not forget that at the time you moved for a council on the one matter only, how widely the course of the Church, in the immorality case had been characterized as arbitrary, vindictive, uncharitable, unjust and unchristian, and surely it was not unreasonable, that if a Council was to be called to consider the financial matter, the Church should insist upon a review of the other case, at the same time, in order to vindicate themselves from the grievous charges made against them, before their brethren.

The Central Baptist Association met at Canning, on the 8th of

June, and upon the earnest request of Dr. Pryor, and his friends, recommended this Church "to invite a Council to be mutually chosen by Dr. Pryor, and the Church to consider the charges that have been made against Dr. Pryor, and the action of the Church thereon."

As soon as this recommendation came before us, (June 17th,) we expressed our "cordial approval" of it, and at once proceeded to carry it into effect. Now here we acknowledge we made a grave error. We made it, it is true, on account of our deference to the opinions of a body, composed of delegates from many churches; but that is a poor apology. No Baptist Church, should adopt any principle, without first thoroughly testing its soundness, no matter from what body of men that principle emanates. The association might properly, in our opinion, recommend a church to invite a council; but not a council to be "mutually chosen." We think this is not the right method of choosing councils. As in a government, rests the right and authority to appoint and nominate a commission to try offenders, so in the individual church, and no where else rests the right and authority to invite and nominate a council.

A Church wishing a council should either invite other Churches to send a specified number, and allow the churches to make the selection, or the Church desiring the council should make their own selection; either of which courses would be in harmony with Baptist practice. But it is, we think, unheard of among Baptists, for a member under discipline to have power to choose councillors, or to veto the choice made by the Church to which he belongs. We hope never to hear again the epithet "*ex parte*" in connection with a council that an independent Baptist Church may call. What! put a member of a Church under discipline on a level with the Church of Christ, whose painful duty it is to see that a wholesome discipline is enforced? To the error of appearing to endorse such a principle, we now confess with regret, that we have seemed to give our approval. May none of the Churches follow us in this. But as we have said before, we did it in our too great deference to the Association. But we bear in mind that our delegates told us how excited was the state of things when the Association made this recommendation. Had there been more time for deliberation, and less excitement, we are persuaded the Association would have avoided that feature of the recommendation to which we are now referring. It is not sound doctrine that the accused should choose his own judges. Juries are not selected half by the crown and half by the prisoner. Try to get a council "mutually chosen." Is the Church to choose whom they will, and

the accused to do the same? Then, the Church may invite men who are considered wholly incompetent by the accused, and they may have to "invite" men whom they themselves regard as unqualified for the high office. Again, is the choice to be mutual as regards each councillor? Then, if you have a bad man to deal with, he may easily thwart every effort to select the members of the council. To adopt this method of choosing councils is out of the question. It is not necessary for us to refer to our own experience to illustrate the manifold difficulties which surround such a course.

We failed in our effort to carry out the recommendation of the Association. We need not go into the particulars of our negotiations. Suffice it to say, that we think we imposed no terms on Dr. Pryor which could be reasonably open to objection.

Thus failing, we then requested the assistance of five brethren living at a distance, who, as we believed, would have examined the whole affair justly and impartially. These five brethren came to Halifax, and were about to enter upon their work, when you read a letter to them from Dr. Pryor, protesting against their authority to deal with his interests, and formally forbidding them to do aught to affect him. In your letter you denominate these brethren "*ex parte* judges." How can you do this? Would it not be wrong to say that our juries are *ex parte* juries, and our judges *ex parte* judges? And yet these are appointed by the Government. No prisoner has a right to interfere in their appointment. Has not every Baptist Church full authority to select and invite a Council, and upon what principle can a member resist the offices of a council thus chosen?

Dr. Pryor would not appear, and without for a moment doubting their entire competency to deal with his case, this Council, adhering to the principle acted upon by Festus, informed us that in the absence of the accused, they would not inquire into the truth of the charges brought against him. Such being the case, the Church, anxious to have a full investigation of all the matters referred to in the recommendation of the Association, at length, through the intervention of the Council of five, came to an agreement with Dr. Pryor to accept his own demands, and by dint of the most persevering efforts got all the arrangements concluded for inviting the Council of twelve.

This Council met, sat for seven days, heard testimony, heard argument, and delivered their decision. When that decision came before us for our consideration, we felt that for reasons we then put on record, we could not as a Christian Church, conscientiously adopt the

findings of the Council as our basis of action. This is the head and front of our offending. Upon this point you are very severe upon the Church. You seek to crush us by the overwhelming weight of your censures. You hold us up to view as proud, self-conceited, presumptuous, and we know not what beside, just because we have persevered in carrying out the directions of Scripture, as judged by ourselves, in a case of painful discipline. This is not only the prerogative of a Church, but it is its bounden duty, and from this course we could not allow ourselves to be turned aside, not even by the high regard which we have been wont to attach to your opinions.

As this is a point of very great importance, and one on which your statements show that your views depart widely from what we hold to be the teachings of Scripture, we will discuss the matter at some length. We quote the following statements, from your letter :—

“And hence the momentous importance of the crisis that has been created by the bold rejection, by the Granville Street Church, of the judgment and advice of the Council, recently assembled in Halifax.” “The same principle of ordinary honesty, required submission to the judgment of the council, and your rejection of its judgment is an insult to the Association, and to the Council, and is most unjust and dishonorable, as regards Dr. Pryor.” . . . “In the midst of the meaningless distinctions, and childish quibbling, that disfigure the resolution, there may be discovered the controlling notion that it was for the church members to judge the judgment of the council, and to enquire and know *why* they should differ from the opinion which the church had formed.”

Now, we maintain, that every Baptist Church has a right, and is bound to “judge the judgment” of any council to which they have submitted any question for their advice, and if that council differ in opinion, from the church, the latter is bound to enquire, and know upon what grounds they so differ. But let us here say, that in the course which we adopted, the Church, intended no insult to the Council nor to the Association, neither did they aim to inflict any injustice upon Dr. Pryor. The manner of receiving the decision of the Council, we regard as courteous and respectful. When it was formally submitted to us for consideration, we appointed a committee to examine Minutes of Council, and the evidence, in order to gather any information which might assist us in carrying out the recommendation of the Council. That committee did its work, and reported at a subsequent meeting. At this meeting, the Church used this language: “*Resolved*, That with respect to the recommendation which concludes

the decision, the Church regard it as alike due to the Council, and to Dr. Pryor that that recommendation be promptly acted upon, but in approaching the reconsideration which the Council have advised, the Church is sorry to be compelled to say that they do not feel warranted in adopting the findings of the Council, as their basis of reconsideration." We believed then, as we do now, that we treated the Association and the Council, with deference and respect. We acted upon a principle clearly laid down in the New Testament for our direction, in discharging the obligations there placed upon us. We claim not the honor of bringing this principle to the light. It is one which is dear to Baptist Churches, one which they have long held, and jealously defended. With the accountability of a Church, we were then deeply impressed, and we still believe that no Christian Church is at liberty to hand over the responsibility of defending its doctrines, or the preserving of the purity of its morals to any other body. They may seek advice from other Churches, or from a Council to assist them in their deliberations, but they are no where authorized to yield their own views of God's word, to the opinions of others, nor can they take the advice of others, when to follow that advice they would be compelled to a course forbidden by conscience and Scripture. When, then, you may ask, is a Church warranted in taking the advice of a council?

1. When such advice is in harmony with their own views of Scriptural direction. They may have formed these views before receiving the advice of a council; or their views may have been brought in harmony with those of a council by wise instructions accompanying such advice.

2. A Church might be in doubt concerning which of two or more courses to pursue in a case of discipline, when, in neither case, special Scripture direction could be found. The advice of a council would, in such an instance, probably turn the scale, and be of great service to a Church; and it would afford a strong probability that the course recommended would be the safe one for the Church to follow.

But a Church is not warranted in taking the advice of a Council when that advice is in antagonism to the course which they are morally bound, as a Church of Christ, to pursue. In such a case they are not only not bound to accept such advice, but they are bound, in the most solemn and sacred manner, to reject it, for they are amenable to the Lord Jesus Christ, their Divine Head.

A Church is not at liberty to pledge itself beforehand to accept the decision of a council, for they have no warrant that such advice

will be in harmony with Scripture teachings. The council may be called, and their advice given ; but a Church must compare such advice with the directions of Scripture, before acting upon it. Such a view of the case prompted some of our members to say before a council was called, that they would not pledge themselves, to abide by its decision. Upon the hypothesis that a Church is bound to accept and act upon the decision of a Council, the congregational form of Church government taught in the Scriptures, and believed in, and acted upon by the Baptists, would be at an end. To a body apart from, and less than the Church, there is conceded the authority to control the Church in an act of discipline, or to pronounce upon some article of faith, or principle in Church government. Admit this, and to what will it inevitably and directly lead? There is no fixed number, of which a Council must consist. It may be composed of two, or twenty. According to the tenor of your statements, a council may be called, and to them may be committed the responsibility of considering and deciding a matter which the New Testament declares is exclusively for church adjudication, and the Church would be compelled to accept the conclusions of the council, whether they regarded them in harmony with God's word or not. This leads to a form of Church government the very opposite to that adopted by the Baptists. It would issue most certainly in such a result, if, in addition to the ground already taken by you, it should be made incumbent on a Church to call a Council at the request of one or more of its members. If Baptists adopt this as a principle of Church government, then against those held by other religious bodies they could have nothing to say. Councils may advise, but they can never control Baptist Churches, for so soon as a Church yields its functions to another body, it is no longer a Baptist Church.

Having had, therefore, an unquestionable right, and further, it being our solemn duty to "judge the judgment," we approached the consideration of the Council's decision unfettered by any obligation to act upon conclusions which we might feel ourselves not warranted in adopting. After due deliberation, so many objections presented themselves against basing our action upon the findings of the Council, that we felt ourselves solemnly bound not to mould our course by them. The principal of these we placed on record. Let us briefly review them :—

1. "The Council, in framing a *moral* decision, which, from the great notoriety of the charges made, and of the vehement denial of the accused of his guilt, must of necessity obtain a very wide circulation, have adopted the

formula of the verdict of a jury instead of the unequivocal language of the deliverance of a Church Council.

The decision on the first charge reads thus: "that in the opinion of this Council, Dr. Pryor is not guilty of immorality as charged in the allegation." So positive and emphatic an expression would naturally be understood to convey to the Church, that the Council wished it to believe that the many and suspicious facts extending over a period of three years adduced in support of the charges, were explicable by the Council apart from the supposition of criminality; whereas, as publicly explained to the Church, by the President of the Council, it expresses the fact that direct evidence of criminality was wanting.

The decision on the second charge, "that the Council acquit Dr. Pryor of dishonest or fraudulent intention, in his dealings as the agent of Miss Vass," would appear to express the conviction of the Council, that all the evidence in support of the charge, was explicable by them on grounds consistent with honesty; whereas, as publicly explained by the President of the Council to the Church, it means that dishonest and fraudulent intention was not to their minds fully proved."

On the one charge the verdict is "not guilty," and on the other, "the Council acquit." Did the Council mean to declare their belief in Dr. Pryor's innocence? Quite otherwise. You ask us how we know this? We take the language of the President of the Council, spoken as he read the decision, and while it was in his hands, as our authority. But you answer, we have no right to do so. Written documents are not to be "defeated, altered or abridged by verbal explanations." Our answer is two-fold. We do not dispute the general principles you lay down, but this document expressly points to "verbal explanations," and thus authorizes their adoption. Read the decision till you come to the end of the judgment upon the three matters submitted. At this point the President paused and made certain "verbal explanations." After this he proceeded to read the remainder of the document. Here occurs this sentence: "They (the Council) may *utter* somewhat in the above way, but they cannot *write* anything further." What does this language mean? Most undoubtedly that the Council expected the President to give verbal explanations while reading the document. It cannot mean anything else. In the second place, if the President uttered a single word that did not agree with the views of his fellow-councillors, the latter should have at once repudiated what he said. They did not do so; and by their silence *endorsed his statements*, and you find this entry on their minutes:—"The President of Council gave explanations on some points referred to in the decision read by him to the Church."

The written decision, then, we say conveyed a different opinion, in regard to Dr. Pryor's guilt or innocence from that which the Council really entertained. We think the document should have been so

framed, as to express the real convictions of the Council. It is because the document points us to "verbal explanations" that it is not of itself, a safe guide. But then, could we act upon verbal statements? Of course not.

2. "The decision is not correct, in regard to the case of Mrs. Morgan, inasmuch as the Church put in evidence, and the Council received certain statements made by Dr. Pryor, to a committee of the Church, and reduced to writing by them in terms suggested by Dr. Pryor himself. (See copy of minutes of Council, 7th Session)."

The Council say, "that in the absence of all evidence in the case of Mrs. Rachel Morgan, the Council dismiss said case." We look upon the decision as incorrect in this particular, since there was evidence in that case. The minutes of the Council show that "written statements made by Dr. Pryor, were presented," and that with these, the "testimony" closed. If those statements reveal a line of conduct consistent with what may be expected from a Christian minister, then the Council were substantially correct; but we confess our inability so to read them.

3. "The decision is unaccompanied by the evidence adduced, and does not show how the Council reached their conclusions in the face of the evidence. The Church was anxious to be informed how the facts adduced by them in support of these charges could consist with the absence of guilt."

Crowell's Church Manual, page 252, contains the following sentence: "The investigation before such a Council should be thorough, and a full record of all the facts proved should be entered on its minutes, with the names of witnesses, and a copy should be transmitted to the Church, who may proceed to an original investigation if not satisfied with that of the Council." Here the proper course is clearly set forth. Instead of this course the Council gave us only the bald decision, and it was with some difficulty that even a *copy* of their minutes was afterwards procured. Here was an "advisory Council" giving advice. They advised us "to reconsider" our action, and in so doing referred us to their verdict. Were we to act upon that advice in the light of their conclusions, without being furnished with the data upon which those conclusions were based? To our minds the evidence against Dr. Pryor left no way of escape from the supposition of guilt. The words of the decision point to a different belief on the part of the Council, and imply that another and intelligible rationale of the facts of the evidence was possible. Why did they not make an effort at least to convince us of our error. We might then have seen good reason for changing our opinions.

4. "With respect to the action of the Church, they take this opportunity of saying that the decision is meagre and vague. They asked 'Whether their

action was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances ; and if not, why not ; and what course the Church should have adopted " and although that action extended over a period of four months, and embraced many important points in Church government and discipline, in regard to which the Church fully expected a definite and guiding opinion, yet only two subjects are mentioned in the decision, viz., the charge of ' precipitancy in virtually suspending Dr. Pryor on the occurrence of the unhappy incident in Pleasant Street,' &c., and the matter of calling a Council, on one only of which a decision was given. In regard to the former, the Council say, ' whatever mistakes' the Deacons may have committed, they are not, in view of the suddenness with which their duties devolved upon them, chargeable with want of affection. What mistakes did the Deacons make? The Church wished, and considered themselves entitled to be specifically informed on the point."

5. " While investigating the charges against Dr. Pryor, the Council, notwithstanding the objections of the Church thereto, adopted the procedure of Courts of Law, instead of that of advisory Church Councils ; but, in considering the action of the Church, they reversed their method of proceeding."

The brethren appointed by the Church as their representatives before the Council, were taken by surprise when the Council compelled them to put in written allegations against Dr. Pryor, and to appear as prosecutors. This was an attitude which the Church had never assumed, and one which the Church still regard as of doubtful propriety. We expected that the Council would have carefully investigated the whole case, in relation to both Dr. Pryor and the Church, in the manner usually adopted by advisory Church Councils. The course adopted during the investigation of the charges against Dr. Pryor, furnished you a rare occasion for the exercise of your great legal abilities ; and no sharpness known in legal courts was left untried by you in preventing the admission of testimony offered by the Church. But when the Church was put upon its trial, the nine allegations which had been presented against them were requested, or directed, to be withdrawn. The Church had been arraigned before the Association for grievous offences, alleged to have been committed against their late Pastor. Nay, more. These alleged offences induced the Association to recommend the Church to invite a Council. These offences were grouped together into nine distinct allegations, and laid before the Council on behalf of Dr. Pryor. The Church was fully prepared with evidence, chiefly documentary, to show the utter groundlessness of the charges made, and thus vindicate themselves before the Council and the Churches. Here was little room for the exercise of legal shrewdness and acumen. The means at the command of the Church for its defence were simple and direct ; and it would, most assuredly, have been proved over and over again, that the accusations made against the Church were without foundation. Against the course pursued by the Council we protested at the time—not

against the course *per se*, but against its adoption at so late a stage in the proceedings, and under such circumstances as would inevitably defeat one of the objects of calling the Council,—the obtaining of a distinct and unequivocal decision from the Council upon each of the accusations which had been made against us, before the Association and elsewhere. We thought it due to us that such grave accusations should have been pronounced upon, *one by one*, and the more so that they were re-alleged in definite form before the Council.

[We may here notice a mistake into which we think you have fallen in regard to these nine allegations. You say, “I gave in written charges against the Church, or those who had been active in the prosecution, which I withdrew in consequence of the Council thinking that their functions did not extend beyond the complaints of the Church, and Dr. Pryor, against each other.” The minutes of Council, contain the following remarks: “Dr. Pryor, laid upon the table, his allegations.” “The Council requests Dr. Pryor to withdraw the charges against the Church, that it may investigate the action of the Church, according to the terms of the following resolution” &c.—“Whereupon said charges were withdrawn by Judge Johnston, on behalf of Dr. Pryor.” From these extracts from the minutes of Council, it would appear that Dr. Pryor was the author of the charges against the Church, that he and you led the Council to believe that they were Dr. Pryor’s charges, and that they were withdrawn, in order that the Council might consider the matter by the terms of a certain resolution. From your letter, however, the fact comes out, that you were the real author of the charges, and moreover, that Dr. Pryor had no such complaints to make against the Church, inasmuch as the complaints contained in those allegations, did not, by your showing, come within the jurisdiction of the Council, whose “functions did not extend beyond the complaints of the Church, and Dr. Pryor, against each other.” The Council fancied that Dr. Pryor was the author of these allegations, the Church looked at the matter in the same way, but it now appears that you became the real prosecutor of the Church. This fact raises a doubt in our minds, whether, after all, we have not blamed Dr. Pryor for many things for which you were more responsible than he.]

6. “The Council would not admit the testimony given and signed, by Margaret Robinson, before a Committee of the Church; whilst at the same time they received as evidence, from Dr. Pryor, and Dr. Crawley, purely *ex parte* documentary testimony in regard to Dr. Pryor’s character.”

You say, “the Council is reproached, for listening to this latter

testimony." That is not a fair statement. Our objection is clear and explicit. We objected to the council using *ex parte* evidence in one case, and shutting it out in another. In the case of Margaret Robinson, the testimony given by her was read over two or three times to Dr. Pryor, and he had been offered the opportunity of cross-examining her, and he had declined to avail himself of that opportunity, and we did think, and do still think, that the Council did not deal justly, when they shut her testimony out, and received a number of letters, purporting to come from Cambridge, from persons of whom we knew almost nothing, and the only object of which could be to refute a scandal, which had never been before the Church, nor had been brought by them before the Council. You say, the records from Cambridge were sought to be denied. Such was not the case.

7. "Though conducting their proceedings after the manner of Courts of Law, the Council denied the Church the right, either to cross-examine Dr. Pryor, or Dr. Crawley, in regard to a portion of the former's past life in the ministry, or to adduce certain important rebutting testimony in reference thereto, notwithstanding he and his *advocates* were allowed to testify *ad libitum* with respect to the spotlessness of Dr. Pryor's past life."

Why did you not expose this violation of one of the "fundamental principles of British jurisprudence"—the right of cross-examination? Do you talk of *ex parte* Councils and *ex parte* evidence? What was this evidence—*ex parte* or not? You know well the value of cross-examination. You know it is one of the "safe-guards of society." You know it is one of the principal and most efficacious tests ever devised for the discovery of truth. Here was Dr. Crawley, reviewing Dr. Pryor's past life, and declaring his belief so strong in his innocence that he thought he could "stake his existence" upon the point, and yet the Council refused us the right to bring him to the test of cross-examination upon an important particular. Was this right? You know it was not. Nor can it be said in excuse, that this course was parallel to that pursued by the Committee with respect to Dr. Pryor. That would be no excuse, even if true. It must be remembered that the Church, as we have clearly shown, furnished ample and timely opportunity to Dr. Pryor of redressing any alleged grievance suffered at the hands of the Committee.

The Council refused us the right of cross-examination as above. But this was not all. They debarred us from presenting certain important rebutting testimony. Upon this point your feelings rise high, and your language is strong; but your language is unwarranted and misdirected. That the Council should have admitted this rebutting testimony, we thought, and still think, was necessary. If true,

it should have been admitted to meet the defence set up by Dr. Pryor; if false, it should have been admitted to enable a Baptist minister to show to the world that a story very generally believed to be in accordance with fact, and from the influence of which that minister was then and still is suffering, had no foundation in fact. Your charge that we sought to revive the transaction alluded to "from its long oblivion," and your remarks in reference to the address which "the individual alleged to have been offended" united in presenting to Dr. Pryor in Wolfville, may best be disposed of by an extract or two from a letter which he felt called upon to forward to a member of this Church, upon the perusal of your published letter:—

"As some of the members of the Granville Street Church are in Judge Johnston's letter represented as having, from improper motives, and in an unchristian spirit, endeavoured to bring forward evidence from transactions long buried and forgotten, for the sole purpose of injuring Dr. Pryor, I think it proper to state distinctly and positively, that I was never asked by any member or friend of Granville Street Church to go to Halifax for the purpose of giving evidence in Dr. Pryor's case.

"In explanation of my subsequent treatment of Dr. Pryor, after I had received his letter * * * expressing his deep regret and repentance for what had happened, I hoped such were his real feelings, and determined in view of this * * * to say nothing further on the subject, but try my utmost to forget what was past. This I have done, * * * and endeavored on every occasion, to act towards Dr. Pryor as if nothing had passed, although, I never could look upon him, as I had done, and always treated him with a certain degree of reserve. I attended his ministry, and when he was about to leave Wolfville, to go to the United States, I with others, signed an address to him, this being in accordance with my usual course of conduct towards him."

"Such course towards Dr. Pryor I should still have pursued, and should have as I have long done, scrupulously abstained from anything which might injure his character, or recall or make public, what had occasioned so much distress, had not Dr. Pryor, in July last, written me a letter, calling upon me to bear witness to what both he and I knew to be a falsehood. * * *

When the gentleman alluded to came to Halifax and urged his claim to be heard, we, feeling that he had a right to be heard, and that the nature of Dr. Pryor's defence demanded his testimony, promoted his efforts and desired the Council to take his statement. If the transaction alluded to has been sought to be "revived from its long oblivion," the closing sentence of the foregoing extracts must convince you that Dr. Pryor himself, and no one else, is responsible for it.

You and Dr. Crawley were Dr. Pryor's advocates, and yet you took the witness stand, and gave evidence on his behalf. Was that "perfectly regular?" You know that in your Court you would not permit a lawyer to act as counsel and witness in the same cause, and

it does not require much thought to understand the propriety of such a course.

8. "Though conducting their proceedings after the manner of Courts of Law, many of the Councillors were the constant guests of the accused and his advocates."

When the Church invited a Council of five brethren, whom you have called an *ex parte* Council, they placed a copy of the following letter in the hands of each of the five, on or before their arrival in Halifax :—

Halifax, July 31, 1867.

TO THE BRETHREN COMPOSING THE COUNCIL ABOUT TO BE CONVENED
IN HALIFAX AT THE REQUEST OF THE GRANVILLE STREET CHURCH.

The unhappy circumstances which have given origin to the Council of which you are members, and the measures taken thereon by the Church, have resulted in a want of harmony in feeling and action between our late Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Pryor, and a large majority of the Church. Such being the case, the brethren composing that majority, from feelings of delicacy, have thought it advisable that the domestic hospitalities which they otherwise would, as a matter of course, have extended to your Council, should be waived pending the investigation. They have also deemed it prudent that in any interviews other than those of an official character, which may take place between members of the Council and themselves, the subjects under investigation should not be discussed. In thus acting, they are only anxious that they may be free from even the suspicion of having in private conversation attempted to impress the minds and influence the decision of the brethren composing the Council. I am consequently directed to state that the lodgings provided will be made known to you, on your arrival in the city, at the residence of Bro. Selden, Granville Street.

B. H. EATON, *Clerk.*

These five brethren, and the Rev. Mr. March, who was afterwards invited by us, were, accordingly, not entertained as our guests during their investigations. You have given us your valuable testimony to the effect that none of *them* were the guests of the accused or his advocates. We looked upon this step of ours as one of the most vital importance. We desired that Dr. Pryor should be judged by the evidence that might be produced for and against him, and by nothing else.

On the other hand, the six judges selected by Dr. Pryor, became your guests, and the guests of the accused; and they did this, too, when they knew the feelings of the Church in the matter. You seem almost to admit that this proceeding was not right. But what is your answer to our objection? It is, in our opinion, an extraordinary one. It is this: "The six councillors selected by the Church concurred in, and subscribed their names to, the judgment of the Council." We should not have expected that answer from a defender of the "fundamental principles of British jurisprudence." You know very well how

careful British judges are to warn juries, charged with grave matters, to have no communication with others, on the subject of the trial. You know that even the constable who guards the door, is put under solemn oath, to have none but necessary communication with them. You know what very slight impropriety on the part of even one juror during a trial, will make a verdict worthless. But, you say, the six who "were not guests of the accused, or his advocates" signed the decision. Then, tamper with six of a jury as you will, and provided the whole jury agree upon their verdict, that verdict is good. That is your argument. We must speak plainly in this matter. Can you say for yourself—the impassioned and vigilant advocate of Dr. Pryor,—that those members of the Council who were your guests, were not also the listeners to your denunciations of Granville Street Church, of the course it had pursued, of its unjust and tyrannical acts, its pride, selfwill, selfconceit, its thirst for blood; as well as of your testimony to the good character of the accused, and of your explanations of the evidence brought against him? Can you affirm that these ministers and brethren heard nothing of the sort, that you maintained the silence of a judge on these matters, while they were in your company? The "atmosphere" in which you placed these men, may, we think, be judged from the character of your letter to us.

[Your reference to our having made Dr. Pryor, "penniless," is in keeping with the expression made by Dr. Pryor in connection with his solemn asseveration of innocence, "that the Church had brought this trouble upon him,"—which latter expression, after the chairman of the meeting had objected to it, was retracted by Dr. Pryor. Why, you yourself voted that he should no longer be our Pastor. You helped to stop his salary. And, besides, who went to the Association, and applied for a Council? Dr. Pryor. And he was to choose his own judges, and to dictate the number of the same, and we were to pay their expenses!]

It was for such reasons as these, that we could not feel justified, in accepting the decision as a basis of action. To have thus accepted it, would have been to uphold the plainest violations of the most important principles of right and justice. The decision itself, depending as it did, for its right interpretation, not upon itself, and itself alone, but upon "utterances," as to whose meaning you and we, as might be expected, widely differ, was not a safe guide to follow. To think of acting upon the verbal explanations which accompanied the decision was out of the question. To those who were present when the decision was read, and who heard the explanations which fell from the

President, the decision carries a very different meaning from that which a mere reader would gather from its language. To all our Churches, reading with the deepest interest the decision of a Council upon the conduct of one of their ministers, that decision means one thing, while to the Granville Street Church, who heard the verbal explanations given by the President, it means quite another thing. So important a document should have been perfect in itself. We could not, then, act upon the written document, because that was not the whole decision. We could not act upon it, and the accompanying verbal explanations combined, since the latter were liable to be understood differently, by different hearers, and could therefore be no safe guide.

But apart from the character of the document itself, looking at the manner in which the decision was reached, we could not accept it without sanctioning courses of procedure which, as we believe, find no countenance in the principles of the Gospel, or our Church polity, or even in Courts of Law.

In approaching the reconsideration of our previous vote suspending Dr. Pryor from fellowship, we therefore dealt with the subject of Dr. Pryor's membership, not upon the findings of the Council, but upon the conviction produced in our minds by the evidence, and by Dr. Pryor's own conduct. We procured from one of the councillors a very full and accurate report of the evidence placed before the Council. We carefully considered this evidence and Dr. Pryor's own conduct during the whole course of the proceedings, and we arrived at the conclusion that we could not only not restore him to fellowship, but that we could not longer suffer him to remain a member. We accordingly put an end to his connection with the Church, and we cannot at this day see how we could possibly have taken any other course.

We cannot help remarking in this connection, that in your letter you scarcely touch the great question of guilt or innocence of our late Pastor. It seems strange to us that you, knowing that the Church professed to be unable to reconcile the evidence with innocence, should not have made some effort to remove this difficulty, by fairly dealing with that evidence. It amounts to very little for you to say that the unreliability of such a witness, for instance, as Mrs. Baxter, was apparent, inasmuch as her statements before the Council differed from those made before the Committee, *particularly when you bear in mind that she never was before the Committee*. Why did you not take up the evidence and make an effort to show us that we had derived a wrong conclusion from it? If it did not warrant con-

viction, you might have convinced even us of the fact. If there was one man in Nova Scotia more capable of dealing with that evidence than another, you, the Judge Ordinary of the Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes and Judge in Equity, were that man. It was upon this point that your ability and legal experience should have been expended. But your letter is almost silent upon this particular.

And what explanation, let us ask you, was offered before the Council, of the stubborn facts that we placed before them? In the immorality case, against a mass of testimony seeming to point only to guilt, were placed Dr. Crawley's declaration that he thought he could "stake his existence" upon the innocence of the accused, and a number of letters from Cambridge, containing testimony to Dr. Pryor's good character while there. Such testimony as this was all that was placed against the evidence of Policeman Christian, Detective Hutt, Mr. Baxter, Mrs. Baxter, Mrs. Maxner, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Morton and others, touching both the character of Mrs. McMillan, and the character of Dr. Pryor's visits to her, during a period of three years. And this testimony was given after the Council had recorded their unanimous opinion that "testimony to character cannot affect the facts of present conduct." And when you brought Mrs. McMillan from St. John and put her on the witness stand, did you ask her to explain the facts then before the Council, pointing to guilt? No. You having previously, with Dr. Crawley, visited her at her boarding-house, brought her before the Council, and were content that she should be asked but one question. And so thoroughly convinced had you become that she was not a good woman, that you told the Council before that one question was asked, that those who brought her forward would not be responsible either for her character or the truthfulness of her statements.

Then, how was the charge of fraud met before the Council? When, in a series of pecuniary transactions extending over nearly four years, and involving an expenditure of \$70,000 to \$80,000, Dr. Pryor could produce only one receipt for money paid, the answer was, that this loose method of doing business was the result of ignorance. When it was shown that he had not paid out by some thousands of dollars as much as his books represented to have been paid, the reply was, this is the result of ignorance. When, with a receipt in full from Miss Vass, and at a time when Dr. Pryor considered her, as he says, to be indebted to him, and when he was the "penniless" man you represent him to be, he under his own hand authorized the offer of \$2,000 to obtain a compromise, and prevent a further investigation of the trans-

action, we were told that he did it ignorantly. This was the nature of the defence, and the Church did not consider it satisfactory.

With the views the Church held in regard to the evidence, they could not restore Dr. Pryor to fellowship without retaining among their number one whom they believed to be entirely unworthy of membership. And the Church was not assisted by the Council or by you in their endeavor to explain the evidence on the supposition of innocence.

But apart from the evidence in support of the allegations against Dr. Pryor, there were other reasons which rendered it impossible for the Church to restore him to fellowship. We refer now to his own conduct from the 24th of April to the 24th of September. You cannot understand what we mean by Dr. Pryor's conduct during the proceedings, "unless it be his expressions of honest indignation against unjust and oppressive conduct." Let us explain. And here let us do our late Pastor the justice to say, that although it seemed strange that he should have conducted a prayer-meeting on the evening after his arrest without mentioning the fact of his arrest to any of his brethren, and should not have told of the affair at once to some of his friends and members of the Church, and not even to his own wife, but endeavoured by all means to hush it up, yet, when the Deacons had sought him out, and he had met with them, he freely confessed the great impropriety of his conduct. When the matter first came before the Church, (on Friday evening next after his arrest,) Dr. Pryor stated that he had been at Mr. Twining's on the evening he had visited Mrs. McMillan. This Mr. Twining denied before the Council. He stated, also, that Mrs. McMillan had been "very ill" on the day he visited her; that Dr. Sewall had that day attended her; and that it was on account of such illness that he himself was there that night. Dr. Sewall testified that he knew nothing of her being sick, and had not attended her at all while living in that house; and Mrs. Baxter, living in the same house, testified that Mrs. McMillan was well that day—was at the wash-tub, and out hanging up clothes—and that in the afternoon she was out in the town; while Dr. Pryor himself says that she was sitting up when he tapped at her window between 11 and 12 o'clock, and that she remained up for two hours afterwards. Could the Church wink at such facts?

On the Friday evening following his arrest, Committees, as before stated, were appointed to investigate the reports abroad. Seldom we believe, has a Church been found in deeper distress than Granville Street Church was on that night. They went to their homes weeping.

But where did their Pastor go? On this point, let Mrs. Baxter and Dr. Pryor speak. (We quote now, from the minutes of evidence, taken by Rev. S. March, a member of the Council.) Mrs. Baxter says:—"There was a person let in (to Mrs. McMillan's room) on Friday night, (same Friday night,) could not say who it was, at 20 minutes past twelve o'clock. The door was locked. I was poorly myself. Had on a mustard poultice. At ten minutes past 2, the person went out." Dr. Pryor says: "I left before the meeting broke up, (the meeting of Friday night). I do not remember that I went down to Mrs. McMillan's that evening, and stayed with her. I might have done so, and would have thought it nothing remarkable, as she was going away." You will remember how Dr. Pryor was pressed to say distinctly, whether he had been there or not, and he could not say that he had not. What is much worse, he said he would have thought it "nothing remarkable," if he had been there that night. The excuse this time was not that Mrs. McMillan was ill. "She was going away." When we bear these things in mind, perhaps we should not wonder that Dr. Pryor, did not propose to withdraw from the pulpit, while his conduct was under investigation.

Then in regard to the whole matter of calling a Council, it was to us abundantly evident, and Dr. Pryor's letters to us show it, that while he was professing his anxiety to have a re-investigation of the whole matter, he was interposing obstacles to prevent that re-investigation, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the Council of five got him to agree to final arrangements.

But what was his conduct, after the Council had delivered their decision, pronouncing him guilty of "great want of discretion, in the character of his visits to Mrs. McMillan?" Did he meet the Church, and confess the impropriety, acknowledge the fitness of the rebuke; acknowledge as you have done, that the decision was "just and righteous," and express his sorrow that he had given "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," and declare his resolve to exercise more caution and vigilance in the future? He did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, as during the proceedings there were protestation and defiance, so now there were boasting and triumph. The Council's acquittal was trumpeted through the land, and the Council's heavy condemnation was kept in the background. The Council pronounced him guilty of "great want of discretion in the character of his visits to Mrs. McMillan" It was published to the world that the decision was, that Dr. Pryor had shown "great want of discretion in his manner regarding a single case of pastoral visi-

tation." Was this such conduct as the Church could overlook, when they met to decide the question of restoration or exclusion?

But to ask the Church to restore Dr. Pryor to fellowship, when his letter of May 31st, denouncing the Church in the most unmeasured terms, and expressly "requiring" them to "erase his name from their books, and that his separation should be final in this world,"—to ask us to restore him when that letter was still outstanding, was strange indeed. Again, we say, what could we have done but that which we did do?

We may ask you, in passing, if we had been able to take the decision of the Council as our guide, how, with that decision in our hands, we could have done other than we did. What does it say? "That, in the opinion of this Council, Dr. Pryor is not guilty of immorality, as charged in the allegation; yet it is, at the same time, the opinion of this Council, that Dr. Pryor has shown great want of discretion in the character of his visits to Mrs. McMillan." The evidence is overwhelming that Mrs. McMillan was not a good woman. You know the character of Dr. Pryor's visits to this woman; and one of the witnesses produced by Dr. Pryor gave you some idea of the frequency of these visits, when she told you that for sixteen months he had visited her "once or twice a week." What does "great want of discretion in the character of his visits" (and so many visits) to such a woman mean? We are at a loss to know how you could expect us, even with nothing in our hands but the decision and Dr. Pryor's letter of May 31st, to restore him to fellowship.

Here we would speak plainly concerning what the Church expected of the Council. When the Council came to Halifax they found Dr. Pryor excluded from the pastorate of Granville Street Church, and suspended as a member. These were the relations in which he stood to the Church and to the denomination, as far as the action of the Church affected him. His standing as a minister the Church had taken away, so far as they regarded him a worthy minister for them. This was done by excluding him from the pastorate, and this you helped to do. Here is your own language: "I agreed to the resolution excluding Dr. Pryor from the pastorate." But this exclusion was intensified by the suspension of Dr. Pryor's membership. Now, we ask, what was expected of the Council—expected by the Church and by the denomination? As an advisory body, upon whom the eyes of the whole denomination was turned, was it not expected, and reasonably expected, that the Council should give their opinion (after hearing evidence) upon the ministerial relation which they regarded Dr. Pryor

worthy of holding in the denomination. Do they say, "we think he ought still to be recognized and sustained as a minister of the gospel, or to be every where rejected as such?" How sad that they were silent—but how pregnant with significance is that silence? Should they not have said in unequivocal language, "We think he should or should not be retained as a church member in good standing?" That they did not declare themselves somewhat after this manner, may appear more wonderful to those outside than to the members of Granville Street Church, and for this reason: The Church on looking back cannot forget the ordeal through which they passed, in attempting to do their duty in the fear of God in this matter. They wonder now that their mistakes were not more numerous and grave than they were, as they were opposed at every step, and in every conceivable way, by that powerful opposition, which a master mind is capable of bringing against those whose course is sought to be obstructed. But, instead of having to contend with only one such mind, the Council were obliged to meet two. Your opposition we felt; but the Council were obliged to deliberate and decide at the great disadvantage of your opposition, combined with that of Dr. Crawley. We say again, that it is not so surprising to us that some of the main features of the duty of the Council were, in this way, kept out of sight.

Your charge against us for acting too promptly after the delivery of the decision, scarcely requires an answer. The decision was delivered September 5th. We met on the 11th, and appointed a committee to examine the whole matter, who did not report till the 24th, when the vote of exclusion was passed. That, surely, was not precipitant. Your reference to our present Pastor, we think, was uncalled for. We think it was not kind. You know he had but just accepted our call to become our Pastor, and that he could scarcely be expected to know enough about the matter to be able to understand its merits. We say we do think, however hard your feelings against us may be, you might have spared your reference to him. In this connection your own letter, sent to the Pastor and Deacons eight days before we met to decide on the continuance or termination of Dr. Pryor's membership, reads very strangely. Here it is:—

Halifax, Monday, Sept. 16th, 1867.

TO THE PASTOR AND DEACONS OF GRANVILLE ST. BAPTIST CHURCH,
HALIFAX.

I learned with regret this morning, from Mr. Selden, that no notice for a Church meeting during the present week, had been given. It is obviously the duty of the Church to act promptly, on the recommendation of the Council,

to reconsider the vote of suspension. The injustice of delay to Dr. Pryor and his friends is palpable; and delay cannot improve, but must deteriorate, the position of the Church in the matter.

In my opinion, it is the duty and interest of the Church, acting in deference to the Council, to rescind that vote; and the more promptly this is done the more graceful the act will be. If, unhappily, the majority are determined to despise the recommendation, it is in their power to do so, but they have no right to keep Dr. Pryor in suspense. It will be unjust, uncharitable, and unmanly to do so. Dr. Pryor desires to have his position defined. I desire to be able to define mine — others may be like me in that respect.

I hope the appointment of a committee on Friday last will not be made an excuse for delay. It surely would be a most uncandid and unworthy excuse.

I request that a meeting of the whole Church be called to consider the recommendation of the Council, on Friday next,—notice to be given at the Wednesday evening meeting, and personally to such as are not then present. I expect to leave town on the Circuit on the Friday after, and I deem it important that I should be present.

I am, yours very obediently,
J. W. JOHNSTON.

I beg to be informed in season of the decision to call a Church meeting.

We will now notice your request: "I have, therefore, to request that you will take my name, as a member of the Granville Street Church, off the Church books, and consider me as no longer connected with you in Church relations." You hold that a member of a Baptist Church has the right and authority to judge the morality of the Church to which he belongs, and to pronounce upon the forfeiture of its claims to be known and recognized as a Baptist Church. We ask you to view the matter in the light of Baptist principles and practices. As the question now stands, the Granville Street Church most solemnly affirm, that in dealing with their late Pastor they sought direction in prayer and the Scriptures of Divine Truth, and they utterly disclaim the motives you impute to them. On the other hand, a member or members of the Church, mostly relatives of Dr. Pryor, and not unlikely to be biassed in his favour on account of such connection, take the ground that the Church have not been guided by the Spirit and word of God, but have pursued a course which, in their opinion, renders the body unworthy the name or honor of a Church of Christ. Now, we ask, has a member of a Baptist Church authority to come to such a conclusion, and to act upon it? We say most emphatically that he has not, at least not until he has referred the subject to another body to which he has pledged himself to submit such a matter before he deals with it himself. By so doing he ignores an arrangement in which he has acquiesced. We refer now to the Association to whose organization and establishment all the Churches composing it, and consequently each member of these Churches have given their consent. Each Church is bound to sustain and respect

that body, so long as it remains a member of the same, and if each Church is under such obligations, each member is bound in like manner.

Article 6 of the Central Association provides that "when a Church shall desire admittance into this body, application must be made by letter, and satisfactory evidence furnished of its faith and order; this being done, and a vote of acceptance taken, the Moderator shall in behalf of the Association, give to one of its messengers present, the right hand of fellowship." Each Church being called upon to "furnish satisfactory evidence of its faith and order," implies that each Church, seeking admission to the Association, concedes to this body the right to inquire into and pronounce upon its faith and order, with reference to obtaining or holding membership in the Association.

Article 9 says that the Association can "judge for itself, of the propriety of receiving or retaining any Church in its connexion."

Each Church then consents by the terms of union, to acknowledge the Association as delegated and clothed with power to investigate the state of any Church in its connection, with reference to ascertaining its belief, or the character of its practice. In this arrangement all the members of the several Churches have acquiesced. In this way, every member of the Baptist Churches comprising the Central Association has pledged himself to refer the important matter of unchurching a Church, as far as the expression of the public opinion of the Churches goes, to the Association; and not to undertake it himself as you and other members of Granville Street Church in connection with you have done.

As Baptists it becomes you and us to look well to the principles involved in the course which you have marked out for yourself. To this end let us examine that phase of the subject carefully. You hold that Granville Street Church is no longer a Church of Christ. In this is implied the startling fact that one member has a right to decide in so great a matter. A single member of a Church is authorized to pronounce upon the morality or orthodoxy of the Church to which he belongs, and calls upon all the Churches of Christ to accept his decision! This is exercising the unlimited power of a despot. Nothing could be more opposite to the principles and sentiments of a Baptist Church than this.

Another Church of the Association could not receive a member thus rending himself away from his Church because it would, in so doing, accept the decision of one person instead of the opinion of the whole Church judged by that person; it would take the decision of

this one person instead of that of the Association to which it had previously pledged itself to refer such matters; it would break faith with the Association; and it would condemn a Church unheard and untried, which would be contrary not only to the law of God, but also to the law of man. Grant a member the right to pronounce upon the Church to which he belongs, and require another Church to receive him in, and all discipline would be at an end.

Believing these views to be in harmony with Scripture, and in accordance with the practice of the denomination, we cannot grant the request which you have made.

We have thus endeavoured calmly and dispassionately, but plainly, to discuss the most important matters in your letter. Upon one point, however, we have said comparatively little,—that is, in regard to Dr. Pryor's guilt or innocence. That, indeed, depends rather upon the evidence than upon anything we could say. We have written no more on that point than we regarded as necessary under the circumstances. Your letter scarcely calls upon us to show our reasons for thinking Dr. Pryor unfit to be a member of the Church, inasmuch as you would have had us to restore him, whether we believed him worthy of membership or not. To our minds the real question is, whether Dr. Pryor is unworthy of membership, or whether he is an injured and innocent man.

Instead of discussing the question, you go back of it, and labor to show that we had no right, after the decision was given, to consider such a question. You go further back, and occupy a large space in reviewing our proceedings previous to the sitting of the Council. Now, if you accept the decision as "just and righteous," how can you do this? The Council had all our proceedings before them. They investigated our action from the first, to the time at which they sat, and in the whole course of these proceedings there is but one case pointed out in the decision, where the Council seem to think a more prudent course might have been adopted, and in that case absolves us from having acted from "want of affection." If you believed the decision to be a "just and righteous" one, and therefore neither more nor less condemnatory of us than it should have been, how can you animadvert upon our conduct previous to the sitting of the Council at such length? Why rehearse your allegations, when the judgment, which you say is "just and righteous," virtually proves that such allegations ought never to have been made?

On the other hand, in writing to us who did not act upon the findings of the Council, we would have expected you to drop the considera

tion of our conduct which had not been condemned by the Council, and to deal with the grand issue of guilt or innocence. If you believed Dr. Pryor to be an innocent man, why did you not plainly declare your belief in his innocence, and take up the evidence and show that we had drawn wrong conclusions from it?

We have time to say but a few more words. We ask you to reflect on the course you have taken, and the letter you have written. We would have you remember that you are a relative of Dr. Pryor. During our meetings you were the senior Deacon present, and you thought it improper, being connected with Dr. Pryor as you were, to occupy the chair. We appreciated your delicacy in that respect. We would ask you if you ought not to recognize the likelihood of being biassed in his favor?

See how the matter stands. You and six other members of a Church, numbering upwards of one hundred and fifty, are of the opinion that the remaining members have acted so cruelly and unjustly towards their late Pastor, who is a relative or connection of the most of you, that you cannot longer hold fellowship with them. On the other hand, these remaining members, professing to be followers of Christ, and between whom and Dr. Pryor there existed up to April last, the most friendly relations, and who gave more constant attendance on his ministry than some of you, these have thought him unworthy of a place among them, and acted accordingly. We may be wrong, but who is the more likely to be wrong; you, and the six who sympathize with you, or the remainder of the Church? You charge us with many bad and unworthy motives. How do you account for the existence of these motives? You cannot deny that up to April last, we treated Dr. Pryor with as much respect as you did. How is it that almost every member of a Church should thus, all at once, cease to be the friends, and become the bitter and determined enemies of one with whom they had long been on terms of religious friendship? And let us remind you again, that a Council who delivered a judgment which you pronounce "just and righteous," did not so much as hint that we acted from wrong motives, although you and your co-advocates exerted yourselves with consummate ability to show that we had done so.

We would have you read your own letter over again, and see if you have not yourself, committed the one grand mistake, for which you have arraigned us before the bar of public opinion.

The Church "rejected the Council's decision." That is the crown-

ing act of our wicked course. But pause, and see if you that say so, have not done the same thing yourself.

The proceedings of the Church, from the first, up to the sitting of the Council, were fully placed before the Council, and they were asked "whether the action of the Church, relative to Dr. Pryor and the charges against him, was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances, and if not, why not, and what course the Church should have adopted?" What is the decision? We quote the words.

"The Council find, that the Church has been accused of precipitancy, in virtually suspending Dr. Pryor, from the exercise of his public duties, on the occurrence of the unhappy incident in Pleasant Street.

Resolved: 1st. That the Council is of opinion, that in view of the circumstances forced upon the Church, and for the consideration of which time could not then be obtained, the Deacons, whatever mistakes they may have committed, in the duties suddenly devolved upon them, ought not to be charged with the want of affection on account of such mistakes; it nevertheless might have been better, if the Deacons had sought a personal interview with Dr. Pryor, and consulted with him, in reference to the services of the approaching Sabbath.

The Council further find that the Church is regarded as blameable for having refused to call a Council at an earlier period in the history of this whole case.

Resolved, That the Council are not able to decide upon this particular question. But in relation to the whole matter of calling a Council in critical cases of a difficult nature, between Pastor and people, that for the interests of all parties concerned, an advisory Council will generally be found desirable, and that such a procedure is in harmony with the practice of the Churches in these Provinces."

This is what the Council say, in answer to the very distinct and pointed question put by the Church. Now, have *you* shown a disposition to abide by this answer? Your letter affords the most abundant testimony that you have not. *You have rejected the decision of the Council*, and that too, after having given your opinion that it was "just and righteous." This was worse than that which the Church did, for they did not pronounce the judgment, "just and righteous."

The Council passed upon our conduct, and though you and Dr. Crawley pressed the prosecution against the Church with the utmost energy, they have pointed out in their decision but one case in which a more prudent course might, in their opinion, have been adopted, and in that one case, they say the Church "ought not to be charged with the want of affection."

You say, the decision was "righteous." Then it must follow that our conduct merited no severer remark than the Council made. You charge us with harshness and injustice, with doing wrong by not calling a Council sooner, with injustice to Dr. Pryor, breach of faith with you, and want of Christian charity, with want of candor and

truthfulness, with partiality and prejudice, with committing an outrage by reviving the McMillan matter, and with many other serious offences alleged to have been committed before the Council sat. All these charges you pressed against us, before the Council. The Council delivered a "righteous" judgment. They did not condemn us, and yet you come before the world, and hold us up to scorn, for having committed the very offences, for which a "righteous" decision had no rebuke, and when you yourself charge us with not abiding by that decision. In regard to the exclusion from the pulpit, you most plainly "trample upon" the Council's decision. The Council acquitted us from acting from "want of affection." You condemn. The Council did not condemn for not calling a Council sooner. You condemn for that. The Council did not condemn for reviving the McMillan matter. You condemn for that, ("the act for which you determined to separate from Church relations with us.") And so on. Was the Council's decision "righteous?" Then, what do you think of your own decision? Unless you admit that a large portion of your letter (that referring to our proceedings prior to the sitting of the Council) is totally out of place, and ought not to have been written, you must condemn the decision. But it is too late for you to do the latter. The decision was "righteous." The simple fact is, (to use your own language,) that you have accepted the decision "as to findings which you approve," but have rejected it "as to findings which you dislike."

In one of your allegations you charged the Church with becoming the accusers instead of the defenders of Dr. Pryor. Perhaps we have here the true explanation of your whole course of action, which, although you may have regarded it as right, is yet undoubtedly wrong. You verily thought it was your duty to become Dr. Pryor's defender—to gain his acquittal if possible. In our opinion Church discipline could not be maintained if such a principle were adopted by members. Truth should be the object sought. We pray God to bring you to a better state of mind. We think you have erred in the course you have pursued. We think your conduct has been disorderly, and merits reproof. Do not say it is impossible that the relations of Christian brethren can ever again exist between us. Rely upon it that the members of Granville Street Church would willingly forgive your offences; they would rejoice to find you manifesting such a spirit as would remove that which now prevents you from walking with them in peace and harmony.

By order, and on behalf of the Church,

B. H. EATON, *Clerk.*

APPENDIX.

We append to the foregoing Letter the documentary history of our proceedings relating to Dr. Pryor, taken from our Church Books :—

STATEMENT OF DEACONS S. SELDEN, DR. PARKER AND R. N. BECKWITH.

On Thursday afternoon, the 25th of April, 1867, Mr. Beckwith called on Mr. Selden, for the purpose of informing him what he had learned from several persons,—that the Rev. Dr. Pryor, on coming from a house in Pleasant Street about 2 o'clock in the morning of the previous day, had been seized by Mr. James Baxter and charged with having been there two hours in the rooms of a Mrs. McMillan. Mr. Selden and Mr. Beckwith immediately went to consult with Dr. Parker as to what should be done under the circumstances. He was not at home, but a few minutes after, Dr. Parker called on Mr. Selden and stated that he had heard the rumors afloat in the city, and had just called at Dr. Pryor's house. As he, Dr. Pryor, was out, he had left word that he wished to see him on urgent business. We consulted together, and feeling that it might be unpleasant for us to go together to Dr. Pryor's house, we concluded to invite him to meet us on the same evening, at 8.30 o'clock. We met at Dr. Parker's. Immediately on Dr. Pryor's entering the room he commenced to state that he supposed we had sent to see him in reference to the rumors in circulation concerning himself, and the charges which had been made. He stated that on Tuesday evening (the 23rd) he had been with Mrs. Pryor, at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. James DeMill, beyond the Common; and as their child was dangerously ill, Mrs. Pryor proposed to stay there all night. He had left there about 9 o'clock and came in, calling at Mr. Charles Twining's to see how Mrs. Twining was, as he had not been there before for some time. After this he had gone to see Mrs. ——— who was very ill. He then went home and was engaged in reading. When about 10 o'clock, Mr. ——— came in, and asked him (Dr. P.) to come over and take some supper with them. After staying about an hour, he (Dr. P.) had returned across the street to his own home, and sat down again to read. He shortly remembered, that, on calling on Mrs. McMillan in the morning, he had found her sick, and had promised to see her again in the evening. He noticed that it was about 11.30 o'clock, and though so late thought if there were a light in her room he would go in, but if not he would return. On going to the house he saw a light there and tried the door, but finding it fastened, he rapped at the window, at which Mrs. McMillan came and let him in. He was engaged in conversation with her for a good while, principally on what had been recently occurring in the city—especially on the sudden deaths which had taken place. Before leaving, the conversation had turned on religious subjects. He had continued there for a considerable time, but did not think of the lateness of the hour. On rising to leave, he found it was later than he had supposed, Mrs. McMillan's clock having stood still. Going into the street he saw some person at the head of the Gas Works Lane. Mrs. McMillan was living in the third house south. On coming into the street, it had occurred to him that it was a very indiscreet thing to be coming from a house at that hour of the night; and not being desirous of meeting any one at that hour, he was proceeding across the street, when he

perceived the person he had observed, approaching him. On coming up, the said person, Mr. James Baxter, seized him by the collar, and charged him with visiting Mrs. McMillan for an improper purpose, and staying in her room two hours,—that he had been watching outside, determined to find out who it was. He had supposed it to be some other person, and stated that Mrs. McMillan was a woman of bad repute. He (Baxter) then called James McDonald, policeman, who was also near, to come and take him (Dr. P.) in charge. He used most violent language towards Dr. Pryor. Dr. P. entreated McDonald to save him from Baxter. McDonald refused to take him (Dr. P.) in charge. Dr. Pryor told them that Mrs. McMillan had been sick and had a doctor attending her. On being questioned as to the name of the medical man, Dr. P. stated that it was Dr. Sewall. He (Dr. P.) had visited Mrs. McMillan as one of his congregation. He admitted the impropriety of being there so late, but entreated them, Baxter and McDonald, to say nothing about it, as it would be injurious to his character, and would break Mrs. Pryor's heart. Baxter, however, persisted for some time in abusing him, and threatened to give information at the police office in the morning. Dr. Pryor promised to see him again in the morning. He went to his house early in the morning, and again besought him to say nothing of the matter, which Baxter partially promised, but on meeting him afterwards he found it had been spoken of. It had got abroad in the city and it was too late to stop the report.

We then asked Dr. Pryor why he had not gone to some of his friends and spoken to them of the affair—two days had passed since it had taken place, and nothing had been known to us until after it had been made the common talk of the city. He replied that he had hoped that it would not have been necessary—that it would not have spread abroad, but would have been hushed.

He (Dr. P.) was greatly agitated, and asked us how could he get it made known to Mrs. Pryor. We replied that in that matter it was impossible that we could aid or advise him. It was a charge of such a nature that none but himself could speak to her about it.

Some time was spent in considering what could be done. As the rumors were all over the city, in everybody's mouth, we agreed to call a meeting of the male members of the Church on the following evening, when the statements we had just listened to, might be made to them, and any exaggerated and false rumors might be corrected. The members of the Church were accordingly summoned, and met to the number of about thirty, at 8 o'clock, on the evening of Friday. Judge Johnston, being the senior Deacon present, was requested to take the chair, but declined, intimating that it would be improper for him under the circumstances to do so, whereupon he requested Mr. Selden to take the chair.

The foregoing is to the best of our knowledge and recollection a correct statement of the facts connected with the case of Rev. Dr. Pryor and Mrs. McMillan, from the date mentioned at the commencement thereof, to the time of the first meeting of the Church.

(Signed)

STEPHEN SELDEN,
D. McN. PARKER,
R. N. BECKWITH.

August 1st, 1867.

MINUTES OF CHURCH MEETINGS, ETC.

April 26th, 1867.

At a meeting of the male members of the Church called this evening, for the purpose of considering certain charges made against the moral character of our pastor, Rev. Dr. Pryor, Bro. Selden in the chair,—after listening to observations from Rev. Dr. Pryor and various brethren, embodying the

substance of such charges, together with Dr. Pryor's explanations of the same, *It was resolved*, That a Committee of five brethren be appointed, consisting of Bros. Selden, Beckwith, Ackhurst, Rand, and Paint, to investigate such charges.

Also resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed, consisting of Bros. Greenwood, Fraser, and Vaux, to investigate certain charges made by Miss Vass against Dr. Pryor, as also the difficulty of Bro. McVean and Miss Vass, and Dr. Pryor as her agent. Both Committees to report as early as possible.

After the close of this meeting several of the brethren consulted together, and concluded that it would be inexpedient that Dr. Pryor should preach on the following Lord's day, and requested Deacon Selden to communicate with Dr. Pryor on the subject, and to invite Rev. D. M. Welton to occupy the pulpit.

Next morning the following note was forwarded to Dr. Pryor:--

Saturday Morning.

REV. DR. PRYOR:

My Dear Sir,—After you left the room last evening the brethren came to the conclusion that, in the present state of affairs, it would not be right to tax you to fill the pulpit to-morrow. With your concurrence, therefore, we propose to get Mr. Welton. Have the goodness to reply per bearer.

Yours very truly,

S. SELDEN.

R E P L Y.

Dear Br.,—Whatever the brethren decided upon, I, of course, consent to. It seems, however, not exactly in accordance with usual custom. Will it not look as if my brethren thought me guilty?

Yours truly,

JOHN PRYOR.

The next meeting held in reference to these matters, took place on the 10th day of May, notice thereof having been given from the pulpit on the previous Sabbath. The minutes are as follows:—

Friday Evening, May 10th, 1867.

At a meeting of the brethren of the Church, called for the purpose of hearing the report of the Committee appointed to investigate certain charges made against the moral character of our pastor, Rev. Dr. Pryor; Deacon Selden in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read, and, after a slight alteration, were approved.

Bro. H. N. Paint, the Secretary of the Committee appointed as above, read their report, laying before the meeting the result of their investigations of the said charges. Whereupon it was resolved that the report of the Committee be received.

The following resolution, which had been prepared by the Deacons of the Church, then passed —

Whereas, On the 26th day of April, a meeting of the brethren of the Church was held in the vestry, for the purpose of receiving from our pastor, Rev. Dr. Pryor, certain statements in reference to reports derogatory to his moral character; and he having explained his motives and reasons for his conduct on the occasion referred to, and having denied all criminality, a Committee was appointed, consisting of brethren S. Selden, R. N. Beckwith, T. H. Rand, H. N. Paint and W. Ackhurst, to investigate said reports,—the said Com-

mittee having presented their report, consisting of the statements made to them by the several parties who were examined—

Be it therefore resolved, That the Church are unwilling to believe, and have no positive proof of criminality in the cases mentioned in the evidence given. The Church are, however, compelled to express their conviction that Dr. Pryor's indiscretion has been so great, as appears by the evidence, and by his own statements, that we regard it as having destroyed all hope of his future usefulness as a pastor in connection with this Church.

Resolved, That the Clerk send a copy of this resolution to Dr. Pryor; and also apprise him that the Committee, on matters connected with Miss Vass' accounts, would hold their report over till this night week, the 17th inst.

The report of that Committee was then laid on the table to lie over.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned to Friday evening next, 17th inst.

The following statement, explanatory of the manner in which their investigations were conducted, has been furnished by the Chairman of the Committee:—

The Committee sought to elicit the truth. With this object they traced rumors and reports to their sources. The authors were solicited to make a statement of what they knew, and the Committee received the same. Dr. Pryor was not present when the Committee received statements. It did not occur to the Committee that Dr. Pryor would wish, while the city was excited with the scandal, to accompany the Committee in their visits from place to place, day after day; nor did the Committee receive any intimation of such a desire on the part of Dr. Pryor until several days after their appointment. On the contrary, Dr. Pryor said in the presence of two members of the Committee on Saturday, the day succeeding their appointment,—“For my part, I do not see what there is for your Committee to do. A few silly rumors are afloat, but I meet everybody on the street just as I ever did. I know no difference.” On May 6th, however, Dr. Pryor enquired if the Committee wished him to meet with them at Mrs. Maxner's. In reply, he was informed that the Committee had no wish in the matter, but if he desired to be present, the Committee, no doubt, would be pleased to have him. He stated that if the Committee wanted him, he would be at the office of Board of Commissioners of Schools. Four members of Committee called at Mrs. Maxner's, that P. M., having arranged to notify Dr. Pryor to come over if he wished to, but Mrs. Maxner being absent from home no meeting was held at that time. Two of the Committee, however, saw her in the evening and took her statement. After Dr. Pryor's statements had been reduced to writing before the Committee, the statements of all persons received by the Committee were read over consecutively to Dr. Pryor; and he was informed by the Committee that if any of the statements contained in what had been read were false, the Committee would arrange that Dr. Pryor should immediately see any of the persons who had made statements. Dr. Pryor declined to meet any of said persons, remarking that, doubtless, the Committee had already formed their opinions for their report from the statements made, and nothing he could now do would have the effect of altering them. Dr. Pryor was immediately informed that the Committee did not intend to express any opinion in the matter, but simply to present the statements which they had received as their report. Dr. Pryor still declined to meet any of them. The Committee having closed their investigations, met with the Deacons at Deacon Nutting's, where the entire evidence was read to the Deacons in Dr. Pryor's presence.

July 31st, 1867.

S. SELDEN.

Friday Evening, May 17th, 1867.

Adjourned Church meeting of the brethren of the Church. Deacon Selden in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved, with the substitution, at Dr. Pryor's request, of the word "statements" instead of admissions in the last clause of the resolution respecting Dr. Pryor. It was then moved by Deacon Judge Johnston, seconded by Bro. R. M. King, that the resolution passed by this Church at its last meeting, touching the Rev. Dr. Pryor, be amended, by adding after the words "in the evidence given" the following words: "and as opposed to suspicions, we have the tried character of our pastor, as a minister of the gospel, through a long series of years, and his faithful and affectionate services among ourselves, as well as his solemn denial of the present charges." In amendment to the above, Bro. R. N. Beckwith moved, and Bro. Ackhurst seconded, that the Church proceed to hear and consider the report of Committee on Miss Vass' accounts, which amendment being put was lost, eight voting for it and ten against it. The original motion being then put, passed, twenty-two for and one against it. Bro. George Fraser, the Secretary of the Committee to investigate the matter of the accounts between Miss Vass and Dr. Pryor, then read the report of that Committee.

After several lengthened observations from various members of the Church, it was decided to postpone the further consideration of this report until this night week, May 24th, 1867.

Meeting adjourned.

Friday Evening, May 24th, 1867.

Adjourned meeting of the brethren of Granville Street Church. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of the previous meeting read and approved. The report of the Committee appointed to investigate the matter of Miss Vass' accounts with Dr. Pryor was then read by the Clerk, whereupon it was moved by Bro. W. Ackhurst, seconded by Bro. R. N. Beckwith, and passed, that the report of the Committee be received.

It was then resolved that the report of the Committee be considered item by item. After going through a portion of the report, and after addresses from many of the brethren, it was resolved that we adjourn the present meeting till next Monday evening, May 27th, 1867.

Monday Evening, May 27th, 1867.

Adjourned meeting of the Church. Deacon Selden in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Dr. Pryor read a paper, embodying the substance of his explanations of, and answer to, the matters contained in the Committee's report, which paper he wished appended to the report; whereupon it was resolved that the same be received and appended to the report, as Dr. Pryor's answer to the matters contained therein. Upon the request of Bro. Greenwood, the Chairman of the Committee, it was resolved that the Committee have power to deduct the sum of \$418 from the amount stated in their report as overcharged by Dr. Pryor, as paid to Messrs. McVean & Co., and that the further sum of \$402 be deducted from said overcharges so soon as the note of Mr. McVean and Rhuland, in favor of Miss Vass for the latter amount, is handed over to Miss Vass, thus leaving the nett sum of \$231, still overcharged, as being paid McVean & Co.

The meeting was then adjourned to the next evening, May 28th, 1867.

Tuesday Evening, May 28th, 1867.

Adjourned meeting of the Church. Deacon Selden in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Rev. Dr. Pryor read a paper in further explanation of the matters contained in the Com-

mittee's report, which he requested to be added to the former written statement given by him, as his answer to the said matters.

It was resolved that the additional statement be received.

It was also resolved that the Church is now ready to proceed to deal with this matter without further investigation of the accounts connected therewith. It was then moved by Bro. Vaux, seconded by Bro. Tapper, That—

Adjourned to next evening.

Wednesday Evening, May 29th, 1867.

Adjourned Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Bro. Vaux rose and said, that, as the resolution moved by him on the previous evening was prepared hurriedly, and did not perfectly carry out his views, he would beg to move the following resolution as a substitute; Bro. Tapper assenting thereto:

Whereas, On the 27th day of April, the brethren in meeting assembled, in presence of Rev. Dr. Pryor, who assented thereto, did appoint a Committee, consisting of brethren E. G. W. Greenwood, George Fraser and Horatio Vaux, for the purpose of investigating certain charges made by Miss Vass against Dr. Pryor, and also the difficulty existing between Bro. John McVean and Miss Vass, and Dr. Pryor as her agent.

And Whereas, The said Committee, after receiving a list of said charges, and the books and papers furnished by Dr. Pryor containing the accounts between Miss Vass and Dr. Pryor, and assented to by them severally as representing said accounts correctly, have given said books and papers a most patient, careful and searching examination, and after placing the results of their investigations before Dr. Pryor, failed to obtain from him satisfactory explanations of the apparent defalcations, have reported to this Church the said charges and the bases on which they rest, as exhibited by the documents placed in their hands by Dr. Pryor.

And Whereas, The Church having heard from Dr. Pryor his explanation of said accounts and incorrect entries; and having learned that subsequent to the preparation of the Committee's report, Dr. Pryor urgently sought to make a pecuniary compromise with Miss Vass, which fact has a serious bearing on the correctness of the statements given in Dr. Pryor's defence.

And Whereas, Dr. Pryor has expressed his entire satisfaction with the manner in which the Committee had conducted their investigation of his accounts, as well as with the time allowed him by the Church to prepare his defence, read at two consecutive meetings and appended to the Committee's report,

Be it therefore resolved, That the Church do not consider the explanations given satisfactory, as accounting for the overcharges and inaccuracies in the accounts submitted; and that whilst we are unwilling to believe that Dr. Pryor had any intention of fraud, and would still hope that further light may be thrown upon the matter, they feel that several of the facts elicited are of so grave a character, and apparently confirmatory of the charges made, that they demand from us the fulfilment of a most painful duty—that of suspending fellowship with Dr. Pryor until such time as he shall afford satisfactory explanation to the Church.

Deacon Johnston then moved, and Bro. J. W. Johnston, jr., seconded, the following resolution in amendment to the foregoing:—

Whereas, Certain charges have been brought to the notice of this Church, by Miss Ann Vass, against the Rev. Dr. Pryor, in matters of business accounts between them.

And Whereas, A Committee were sent out to investigate said charges, and have reported that they have found inaccuracies in said accounts.

And Whereas, Dr. Pryor, in his explanatory statements, has admitted that

some of the said inaccuracies (over-charges) were made by him, but claims that they occurred through his incompetency to keep accounts, and solemnly disclaims any intention on his part to wrong Miss Vass or misappropriate her money—in proof of which he has shown that he also made mistakes—as omissions and over-charges in said accounts against himself in several and large amounts.

And Whereas, It appears that Miss Vass' business became extensive, intricate and burdensome, including the completing and building of expensive houses, large banking operations, money receipts, and payments to a large amount; and it is clear from the mode in which his accounts were kept, that he did not possess the knowledge of accounts necessary for the perplexing and harassing business which was thrown upon him,

Therefore be it resolved, That while we consider Dr. Pryor to have been unwise in assuming a duty for which he was not qualified, we do not consider him to be guilty of intended wrong to Miss Vass.

After some discussion the meeting adjourned till Thursday evening, May 30th.

Thursday Evening, May 30th, 1867.

Adjourned Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of previous meeting read and approved. The amendment moved at last meeting was put and lost.

Deacon Johnston then moved, and Bro. J. W. Johnston, jr., seconded, the following resolution in amendment to the resolution before the Church:—

Whereas, The Church having concluded its investigation of the facts connected with Miss Vass' charges against the Rev. Dr. Pryor, in relation to matters of business, is engaged in the solemn inquiry, whether or not the errors in his accounts are attributable to a wilful purpose to defraud Miss Vass.

Resolved, That in consideration of the solemn nature of this inquiry, and its momentous consequences alike to Dr. Pryor and his family, and to this Church and to the denomination, it is just and becoming that the Church should seek the aid of an advisory council of ministers in the denomination,

Therefore resolved, That a council of — ministers in connection with the denomination, to be selected by the Deacons in consultation with Dr. Pryor, be invited to aid the Church, by its advice, in the exercise of this most distressing and responsible duty.

Which amendment, having been discussed and put to the meeting, was lost, 8 voting for it and 12 against it.

It was then moved by Bro. Fraser, and seconded by Bro. Robinson, and passed, that the original resolution be amended by striking out the following clause: "And having learned that subsequent to the preparation of the Committee's report Dr. Pryor urgently sought to make a pecuniary compromise with Miss Vass, which fact has a serious bearing on the correctness of the statements given in Dr. Pryor's defence."

The original resolution thus amended then passed.

It was moved by Bro. Rand, seconded by Bro. Fraser, and passed, that the Clerk afford an opportunity to Dr. Pryor's relatives, friends and ministering brethren, to read the reports of the two Committees lately submitted to the Church.

The meeting then adjourned.

NOTE.—Previous to the two resolutions, affecting Dr. Pryor as a pastor and member of the Church, being taken, he, with his hand upon the Bible, solemnly declared himself entirely innocent of the charges preferred against him.

Friday Evening, May 31st, 1867.

Monthly Church meeting.

The following letter was read, but no action taken thereon:—

TO THE DEACONS AND MEMBERS OF THE GRANVILLE ST. BAPTIST CHURCH.

I have received a copy of a resolution, passed at a meeting of male members of the Church last night, by which I am suspended from the fellowship of the Church until such time as I shall afford satisfactory explanations to the Church. The effect of this mode of dealing with me is at once cruel and insulting.

Those who have passed that resolution cannot but know that this reference to further explanations, is, from the nature of the circumstances, no better than a mockery so far as I am concerned; how far it comports with candor and manliness on their part, this is not the time, nor the occasion to inquire. In this crafty and most insidious resolution not one word is said, nor even a hint given, that the over-charges were as many against myself as against Miss Vass—not one word to let it be known that the Committee themselves, on further investigation, had requested to be allowed to alter their report, so as to show that even in one single account—that of Mr. McVean—an error had been discovered of more than \$800; that instead of my mistake being upwards of \$1000, it was but little over \$200; that on the very last day of my appearing before the Church an error was discovered of more than \$70, which I had made against myself, thus carefully and wilfully excluding every extenuating circumstance, while putting in the strongest light, everything that could be construed against me.

The individuals who passed that resolution must also know that, after the treatment I have received from them, I never could, under any circumstances, desire to renew a communion with them which they have thus harshly broken, or again place myself in the hands of men who, in the exercise of the great power which a Baptist Church possesses, have shown how little they appreciate those gospel principles which were designed to regulate and control that power. Under such circumstances to retain me still a member of the Church in name and subject to its power, while condemned as unworthy of its privileges, is a refinement of cruelty and wrong. I must, therefore, require that in common justice to me, my name be erased from your books as a member, and that the separation between us be final in this world; it is my great consolation that, in the next world, those who have voted for the resolution passed last night will not be my judges.

May 31st, 1867.

JOHN PRYOR.

[The statements respecting accounts in the above letter are incorrect.]

Monday, June 3rd, 1867.

Adjourned Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair.

Moved by Bro. Rand, seconded by Bro. King, and *Resolved*, That the Vass Committee be requested to prepare a review of Dr. Pryor's defence in connection with his accounts with Miss Vass.

The Nova Scotia Central Baptist Association met at Canning, as appears by their minutes, on the eighth day of June, 1867, and adjourned on Tuesday the eleventh of June. The delegates did not return till Thursday, June 13.

On the 14th or 15th of June the following letter was received by the Clerk of the Church:—

June 14th, 1867.

DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to call your attention to a resolution of the Central Association, in which it is recommended that a mutual council be called to

take into consideration the charges against myself, and the action of the Church thereupon. By calling an early meeting of the Church to take action upon this recommendation, you will oblige,

Yours truly,

JOHN PRYOR.

BRENTON EATON, ESQ., *Acting Clerk Gran. St. Church.*

The next meeting of the Church was held on Monday, June 17th, the minutes of which, so far as they relate to matters connected with Dr. Pryor, are as follows :—

Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and adopted.

Deacons Selden and Beckwith made a brief statement of what occurred at the Central Association relative to the late action of this Church in reference to Dr. Pryor. Deacon Selden placed on the table the following resolution passed at the Association :—

“The Association met in private session on Saturday afternoon, at 4 o'clock. The following resolution was passed :—

Resolved, That this Association recommend the Granville Street Church, Halifax, to invite a Council, to be mutually chosen by Dr. Pryor and the Church, to consider the charges that have been made against Dr. Pryor and the action of the Church thereon.”

Bro. Rand moved, and Deacon Beckwith seconded, the following resolution :

Whereas, The Central Baptist Association, lately assembled at Canning, passed the following resolution, namely,—“That this Association recommend the Granville Street Church to invite a Council, to be mutually chosen by Dr. Pryor and the Church, to consider the charges that have been made against Dr. Pryor and the action of the Church thereon,” which resolution has now been laid before this meeting; and although as an independent Church of Christ they are possessed of full and ample power to consider and adjudicate upon all matters whatever pertaining to the interests of this Church, or to the conducting of its proceedings, yet in view of the high respect which they entertain for the Central Association, of which this Church is a member, and for its opinions and acts in its associated capacity,

Be it therefore resolved, That this Church cordially approve of the recommendation of the N. S. Central Baptist Association, to invite a Council to consider the charges that have been made against the Rev. Dr. Pryor and the action of the Church thereon, and shall be glad to afford every facility in its power to such Council, to enable them to give the whole matter a thorough investigation.

BASIS OF COUNCIL.

1. The Council to consist of — ministers and — laymen, to meet in Halifax, the relatives and connections of Dr. Pryor to be regarded as ineligible; such persons only as are believed by the Church and by Dr. Pryor to be unprejudiced, to be chosen.

2. The subjects for investigation and adjudication to be (1) the charges of immorality, and all testimony having reference thereto, which has been or may hereafter be adduced; (2) the charges of a pecuniary character in the accounts with Miss Vass; and (3) the action taken by the Church in reference to each of the above cases.

3. The expenses of the Council to be borne equally by Dr. Pryor and the Church. Passed unanimously.

It was then moved by Bro. Paint, and seconded by Bro. Fraser, that the Council be composed of three ministers and two laymen. Passed unanimously.

It was moved by Deacon Parker, and seconded by Bro. Ackhurst, that a meeting of the Church, to choose the proposed Council, be held on Thursday evening next, unless it be inconvenient for Dr. Pryor to attend on that evening. Passed unanimously.

A letter from Dr. Pryor, relative to the appointment of the Council, was read.

Adjourned till Thursday, June 20.

The first and second resolutions in the foregoing minutes were forwarded to Dr. Pryor, June 18th, with the following note:—

Halifax, June 18th, 1867.

REVEREND SIR,—I enclose two resolutions passed by the Granville Street Church last evening, and am requested to inform you that the Church will meet with you on Thursday evening, the 20th inst., at 7½ P. M., in the vestry, to choose the proposed Council, if it will be convenient for you to attend at that time.

Please inform me before to-morrow evening, whether it will be convenient for you to be present on Thursday evening, and if not, then on what evening next week you could attend.

Yours respectfully,

REV. DR. PRYOR.

B. H. EATON, *Clerk.*

REPLY.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your note, handed me yesterday, I beg leave to say it will not be convenient for me to meet the Church to-morrow evening, but I shall be happy to do so on Thursday evening, the 28th June.

I must also beg to state to the Church, that, as the proposed Council is not an *ex parte* one, but to be mutually chosen, it does not become me to dictate to the Church who shall or who shall not be its members, nor of how many it shall consist; nor does it fall within the power of the Church thus to dictate to me. And it does not become either the Church or me to dictate to the Council what shall be their basis of consideration; for as independent and disinterested men, they will of course act in accordance with their own judgment, without dictation from either of us.

While I may have no objection to the details, (that, however, I shall leave for our consideration at the meeting to be held Thursday, 28th.) I do, upon principle, object to any dictation, either to myself or the Council, on the part of the Church.

No action of the Church is to bind them previously to our mutually agreeing upon preliminaries on Thursday evening.

Yours truly,

JOHN PRYOR.

BRENTON EATON, Esq., *Clerk Gr. St. Church.*

June 27th, 1867.

Dr. Pryor met with the Church to choose the proposed Council. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and adopted. Dr. Pryor's letter read. On Dr. Pryor's objecting to the clause in the basis of Council passed at last meeting, relative to the class of persons to be chosen, it was moved by Bro. Rand, and seconded by Bro. Robinson, that the following words be substituted for that clause,—“No person to be chosen who has either, in the knowledge of Dr. Pryor or the Church, publicly expressed his opinion in regard to Dr. Pryor's guilt or innocence.” Laid on the table for future action, at request of Dr. Pryor, to give him time for the consideration thereof.

The following resolution was then moved by Deacon Parker, seconded by Deacon Beckwith, and passed:—

Whereas, Dr. Pryor objects to the Council being composed of three ministers and two laymen, or of four ministers and three laymen.

Therefore resolved, That the matter be compromised by choosing five ministers and two laymen.

Dr. Pryor argued against the first division of clause two of the basis of Council, but consented that it should stand.

Then adjourned.

The next meeting was held on the day named by Dr. Pryor. The minutes are as follows:—

July 4th, 1867.

Adjourned Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of last meeting amended and adopted. The Chairman put the following question to Dr. Pryor,—“At a regularly called Church meeting, what number of persons would Dr. Pryor regard as competent to act on behalf of the Church, and whose action he would consider entitled to respect?” To which Dr. Pryor replied in substance, that any number of members present, at a regularly called Church meeting, was competent to transact business on behalf of the Church, but that the respect to which their action would be entitled would depend largely upon their number.

On motion by Bro. Rand, seconded by Deacon Beckwith, it was resolved that business be taken up at the point to which the Church had arrived at the previous meeting.

Dr. Pryor stated that he could not consent to the resolution proposed by Bro. Rand at the last meeting. This resolution was then withdrawn. The following resolution was moved by Deacon Johnston, and seconded by Bro. Payzant:—

Resolved, With the consent of the Rev. Dr. Pryor, that the Council recommended by the Central Association, in relation to the charges against the Rev. Dr. Pryor and the matters growing thereout of, do consist of six ministers and two laymen, half of each to be chosen by the Church and half by Dr. Pryor; and that the Council have power, in its discretion, to choose a ninth member. Further, that the Council be left to pursue its inquiries and deliberations, after having heard such suggestions as the Church or Dr. Pryor may see fit to offer, according to its own sense of duty and propriety untettered by directions or restraints imposed either by the Church or Dr. Pryor; and any resolutions passed by the Church inconsistent with the foregoing resolution, are now rescinded.

It was then moved in amendment by Bro. Rand, and seconded by Deacon Beckwith, and *passed*, that that clause in the basis of Council passed by the Church on the 17th ult., relating to the class of persons to be chosen, be rescinded, and that the following clause be substituted therefor,—“Nominations by Dr. Pryor shall be subject to the approval of the Church, and nominations by the Church shall be subject to Dr. Pryor’s approval.

Then adjourned.

July 12th, 1867.

Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and adopted.

Bro. Fraser submitted the report of the Vass Committee relative to Dr. Pryor’s defence. Report adopted.

The following resolution was moved by Bro. Rand, and seconded by Deacon Beckwith, and *passed*:—

Whereas, The Nova Scotia Central Baptist Association, at its recent sitting, recommended this Church to “invite a Council, to be mutually chosen

by Dr. Pryor and the Church, to consider the charges that have been made against Dr. Pryor and the action of the Church thereon."

And Whereas, This Church, with a sincere desire to carry out, in a prudent and impartial manner, the above recommendation, met on the 17th June last, and unanimously passed the following resolutions and basis of Council, namely:—

1. *Whereas*, The Central Baptist Association, lately assembled at Canning, passed the following resolution, namely:—"That this Association recommend the Granville Street Church to invite a Council, to be mutually chosen by Dr. Pryor and the Church, to consider the charges that have been made against Dr. Pryor and the action of the Church thereon," which resolution has now been laid before this meeting; and although as an independent Church of Christ they are possessed of full and ample power to consider and adjudicate upon all matters whatever pertaining to the interests of this Church or to the conducting of its proceedings, yet in view of the high respect which they entertain for the Central Association, of which this Church is a member, and for its opinion and acts in its associated capacity—

Be it therefore resolved, That this Church cordially approve of the recommendation of the Nova Scotia Central Baptist Association, to invite a Council to consider the charges that have been made against the Rev. Dr. Pryor, and the action of the Church thereon; and shall be glad to afford every facility in its power to such Council, to enable them to give the whole matter a thorough investigation.

BASIS OF COUNCIL.

(1) The Council to consist of — ministers and — laymen, to meet in Halifax, the relatives and connections of Dr. Pryor to be regarded as ineligible; such persons only as are believed by the Church and by Dr. Pryor to be unprejudiced, to be chosen.

(2) The subjects for investigation and adjudication to be (1) The charges of immorality, and all testimony having reference thereto, which has been or may hereafter be adduced; (2) the charges of a pecuniary character in the accounts with Miss Vass; and (3) the action taken by the Church in reference to each of the above cases.

(3) The expenses of the Council to be borne equally by Dr. Pryor and the Church.

2. *Resolved*, That the Council be composed of three ministers and two laymen.

And whereas, At a meeting of the Church on the 27th June, at which Dr. Pryor was present, the foregoing basis was discussed clause by clause, and Dr. Pryor most strongly objecting to the first clause, the following clause was moved and seconded as a substitute therefor, viz.:—"No person to be chosen who has either, in the knowledge of Dr. Pryor or the Church, publicly expressed his opinion in regard to Dr. Pryor's guilt or innocence," which proposed clause was laid on the table at Dr. Pryor's request, in order that he might further consider the same; and the second and third clauses of the basis were then agreed to by Dr. Pryor, and the number of Councillors mutually fixed at five ministers and two lay brethren.

And wherets, The Church met with Dr. Pryor on the 4th of July, and on learning from him that he did not consent to the proposed substitution for the first clause of the basis, the same was withdrawn and the following resolution was adopted, viz.:—"That the clause in the Basis of Council, passed by the Church on the 17th ult., relating to the class of persons who should not be chosen, be rescinded, and that the following clause be substituted, viz.:—"Nominations by Dr. Pryor shall be subject to the approval of the Church, and nominations by the Church shall be subject to Dr. Pryor's approval.'"

And whereas, Dr. Pryor at once said that he could not agree to said clause, and the meeting adjourned without further action.

Therefore resolved, 1. That the Clerk do communicate to the Moderator and Secretary of the Association this failure to carry out the wishes of the Association.

2. That the Church, considering it impossible to carry into effect the recommendation of the Association in its integrity, on account of the demand of the Rev. Dr. Pryor, that he should be allowed to appoint a portion of the Council from among his relatives and connections, (a demand they deem, without precedent, unjust and improper,) and being anxious to effectuate the wishes of the Association as far as possible, and to secure an impartial and thorough investigation of the charges brought against Dr. Pryor, and the action of the Church thereon, do invite a Council of three ministers and two lay brethren to investigate the subjects specified in clause two of the basis hereinbefore mentioned, and to report to the Church their opinion in what degree any and which of the charges alleged against Dr. Pryor have been established before them, and whether the action of the Church relative thereto, and to Dr. Pryor, was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances; and if not, why not, and what course the Church should have adopted; and that the Rev. Dr. Pryor be notified of the convening of said Council, and invited to present his case before them, and be afforded the fullest opportunity to defend himself against all charges that may come before said Council.

It was then *resolved* that Rev. Dr. Spurden, Rev. Charles Randall, and Rev. John Davis be invited to act as Councillors; the Rev. Dr. Tupper and Rev. John Shaw to be invited in case one or more of the first invitations should not be accepted.

It was also *resolved* that Thomas Pattillo and T. S. Harding, Esqrs., be invited to act as Councillors; William Faulkner and Samuel Freeman, jr., to be invited in case of the non-acceptance of the invitation by one or more of the first named.

The following resolution was then passed:—

Whereas, It is important that this Church have an authentic and connected statement of all facts relative to the late difficulties with the Rev. Dr. Pryor in the order of their development.

Therefore resolved, That Deacon Selden, brethren Rand, Fraser, and the Clerk, be a Committee to prepare such a statement, and report the same to the Church as early as convenient.

Then adjourned.

The resolution of July 12th, respecting the Council, was forwarded soon after its passage to Rev. Dr. Spurden, Rev. Charles Randall, Rev. John Davis, and Thomas R. Pattillo and T. S. Harding, Esqrs., with the following Circular:—

Halifax, July 13th, 1867.

DEAR SIR,—I am directed to enclose you a copy of a resolution passed by the Granville Street Baptist Church last evening, and to inform you that it was also resolved at that meeting that yourself, (the names of the other four were here inserted) be invited to form the proposed Council. I have, therefore, now, on behalf of the Church, to invite you to become one of the members of this Council. The place of meeting will be Halifax, and the first day of August ensuing has been named as the day for convening the Council. The Church will provide suitable accommodation for you while here, and liquidate all expenses incurred by you in coming and returning.

Will you be good enough to inform me, as soon after the receipt of this

note as practicable, of your pleasure in this matter, and whether (if it be convenient for you to come) your engagements will permit you to be here on the 1st August, and if not, how soon after that date it would be convenient for you to attend.

Yours truly,

BRENTON H. EATON,

Clerk Granville St. Church.

The foregoing invitation was accepted by all except T. S. Harding, Esq., whose engagements would prevent his attending. William Faulkner, Esq., was then invited to form one of the Council, and the invitation was accepted by him.

Rev. Mr. Davis' engagements stood in the way of his attending on the first day of August, and the eighth day of August was then named, and notice of the change of day forwarded to each person invited.

A copy of the resolution, passed July 12th, was forwarded to Dr. Pryor soon after its date; and as soon as it could be done, he was informed what persons had accepted invitations to form a Council, and when they would meet.

The following communication was received on the 22nd day of July:—

TO THE GRANVILLE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

I have received a copy of a series of resolutions, passed at a meeting held on Friday evening, 12th July. In reply, I beg leave to make the following remarks,—1. You must be aware that I have been most anxious to have the Council which the Central Association recommended. As it was refused me previously to the meeting of the Association, I carried my case before the Association, and it was through my earnest request that the Council was recommended.

2. On my return from the Association, having waited some time to see if any action would be taken by the Church, and having heard nothing from you on the subject, I took the liberty of calling your attention to the recommendation of the Association, and urging upon you some action in reference to it. Instead of a mutual action with me you took it upon yourselves, without my presence or consent, to lay down "Bases of Action," which were calculated to hamper and obstruct the formation and action of the Council.

3. After you had consented to deliberate along with me you refused to come to any agreement, except on such conditions as would necessarily cut off from the Council some of the ablest of our ministers.

4. In the resolution passed at the meeting of the 12th July, you have asserted that which you must have known was not the truth. You therein say that a "demand was made by Dr. Pryor that he should be allowed to appoint a portion of the Council from among his relatives and connections." No such demand, as you well know, was made by me. My action was simply a refusal to consent to a restriction upon the choice of members of the Council, which would cut off from the Council a minister of the gospel, whose ability and reputation made him most eligible, because he happened to be connected with me—a connection so distant, that it could not have rendered him incapable of seeing and adjudging in the case according to the evidence.

5. You have now taken upon yourselves the serious step of calling, upon your own responsibility, an *ex parte* Council. And though I have refused to agree to restrictions on a Council to be "mutually chosen," because you had no right to impose such restrictions, yet you have presumed to invite me to

present my case before this Council, in the selection of which I have not had the slightest choice. Of course I will not place myself in communion with a Council, in the appointment of which I have had no voice; which Council, however suitable and excellent as to the individuals who may compose it, is in direct opposition to the advice of the Association. And I firmly believe that had the Church shown any disposition to depart from the restrictions which *they*, and not *I*, had placed upon the choice, there would have been no difficulty in selecting a Council which would have been mutually agreeable. As the case now stands, I hold myself at liberty to take such course as I deem best suited to the establishment of that innocence which I have all along never ceased to assert.

July 17th, 1867.

JOHN PRYOR.

I wish it distinctly to be understood that I had not the slightest idea or intention of naming any relative or connection of mine on the Council except Dr. Crawley; and my wish to have Dr. Crawley upon it was not because he was a connection, but because of his standing in the denomination and community at large, and from his legal training and long experience, I believed him to be the most suitable person to fill such an office.

JOHN PRYOR.

On the 26th day of July, the following letter was received:—

TO THE GRANVILLE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

Halifax, 25th July, 1867.

It being evident to me, if not to the Church themselves, from their whole proceedings, almost from the very beginning of their inquiries into the reports derogatory to my character, that they have not been influenced by any sincere desire to establish my innocence, if it could be rightly done; but rather to make their first step in the case, viz., their suspending me from my pastoral duties of the Sabbath, to appear a righteous act, though in aiming thus to do, they must condemn me, rightly or wrongly; and the matter being now, by them, narrowed down into an absolute personal hostility to myself, and all overtures of mine being rejected, and all propositions made by me being refused by the Church, nothing now is left me to do, if I would have a Council, than to consent to the Church's own terms, and to yield to their exactions.

Though I do still continue to protest against the right of the Church, *ex parte sua*, to dictate to me or to a Council, by the so called "Basis," formed by the Church, at a meeting of which I was not informed; though, assuredly, I was the party the most deeply concerned in the proceedings and results of the Council—a body, which was to have for its inquiry my reputation, dearer to me than my life; still being now, as I have been from the first, most desirous that a Council, such as the Association recommends, should be called, I am forced by the action of the Church to waive my objections to the "Basis," and to submit to the dictation of the Church. My position leaves me no alternative in the matter, and under pressure I am compelled to yield up my just rights to your demands, in order that an *ex parte* action may be avoided, and a mutual Council chosen.

I make, therefore, this concession to you, that such a Council as you propose in your "Basis" be formed; only stipulating that the number composing the Council be enlarged. Four ministers and two lay brethren to be chosen by the Church, and the same number by myself; all relatives of mine, and of any member of that portion of the Church who has taken part in these proceedings heretofore conducted by you, to be excluded.

This will form a Council of twelve, by no means too large a number when

the interests at stake and the consequences resulting from their action are considered. By this concession I shall be compelled to give up the benefits, as well to the Church as to myself, which would have resulted from the matured wisdom, long experience and high standing in the denomination of the Rev. Dr. Crawley, who was *the only one of my relatives*, if relative he could be called, whom I had the intention of nominating for the Council. I should be glad of an early answer to this communication.

JOHN PRYOR.

[NOTE.—The following letters also passed between Dr. Pryor and the Clerk of the Church :—

Halifax, July 27, 1867.

REV. SIR,—Your communication of the 25th inst., relative to a Council, &c., was received yesterday afternoon, and I shall lay it before the Church at the first opportunity.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Rev. DR. PRYOR.

B. H. EATON, Clerk.

July 29.

In accordance with the resolution I handed you a few days ago, I have now to state to you that the proposed Council will be convened in Halifax, on Thursday, August 8th. I will notify you of the hour and place of meeting as soon as I can do so. The Council will consist of Rev. Dr. Spurden, Rev. Charles Randall, Rev. John Davis, T. R. Pattillo, Esq., and Wm. Faulkner, Esq.

Yours, &c.,

B. H. E.

Halifax, July 29th, 1867.

BRENTON H. EATON, ESQ.,—

DEAR SIR,—I have just received a note from you. I should be glad to be informed whether it is a *private* communication or whether it is sent to me by the direction and order of the Church.

I can scarcely conceive it can be from the Church after I had stated that I would “not place myself in communion with a Council, in the appointment of which I had no voice,” and which “is in direct opposition to the advice of the Association.”

Please inform me distinctly whether your note is by order or resolution of the Church, and at what time the Church meeting was held at which the resolution was passed; and whether my communication respecting its *ex parte* Council was submitted to any regularly called meeting of the Church.

Yours truly,

JOHN PRYOR.

One part of your note is dated 27th July, another part 29th.

Halifax July 30, 1867.

REV. SIR,—In reply to your note of yesterday just received, allow me to say that my note, of which you speak, was not sent by special direction or order of the Church, but was conceived by me to be rendered necessary by the resolution previously handed you, which required that you be notified of the convening of the Council. I was unable, till then, to state the time at which those comprising the Council could assemble. Your communication respecting an *ex parte* Council has not yet been submitted to any meeting of the Church, but a meeting was announced on Lord's day for Wednesday evening, at which I will submit it.

I am, sir, yours truly,

B. H. EATON.]

The Church held a meeting, July 31, to consider the matters connected with Dr. Pryor, the minutes whereof, so far as they relate to those matters, are as follows:—

July 31st, 1867.

Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of previous meeting approved.

Letters were read from Revds. Dr. Spurden, Charles Randall and John Davis, and T. S. Harding, Thomas R. Pattillo and William Faulkner, Esqrs. Also two letters from Dr. Pryor, dated respectively July 17th and 25th, 1867. On motion of Deacon Parker, seconded by Bro. Ackhurst, *it was resolved* that the following letter be sent to Dr. Pryor in answer to his communication of the 25th July:—

Halifax, August 1st, 1867.

REV. SIR,—I am directed to say, in reply to your communication of the 25th ult., that the lateness of its receipt and the character of its language (as well as that of the 17th ult.) both preclude the Church from giving any further consideration to the proposals contained in it.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

B. H. EATON,

REV. DR. PRYOR.

Clerk Granville St. Church.

It was resolved that a copy of the following letter be sent to each member of the Council:—

Halifax, July 31st, 1867.

TO THE BRETHREN COMPOSING THE COUNCIL ABOUT TO BE CONVENED
IN HALIFAX, AT THE REQUEST OF THE GRANVILLE ST. BAPTIST
CHURCH.

The unhappy circumstances which have given origin to the Council, of which you are members, and the measures taken thereon by the Church, have resulted in a want of harmony in feeling and action between our late pastor, the Rev. Dr. Pryor, and a large majority of the Church. Such being the case, the brethren composing that majority, from feelings of delicacy, have thought it advisable that the domestic hospitalities, which they otherwise, as a matter of course, would have extended to your Council, should be waived pending the investigation. They have also deemed it prudent that in any interviews other than those of an official character which may take place between members of the Council and themselves, the subjects under investigation should not be discussed.

In thus acting they are only desirous that they may be free from even the suspicion of having, in private conversation, attempted to impress the minds and influence the decision of the brethren composing the Council. I am consequently directed to state that the lodgings provided will be made known to you, on your arrival in the city, at the residence of Bro. Selden, Granville Street.

B. H. EATON, *Clerk.*

Moved by Deacon Parker, seconded by Bro. King, and *resolved*, That the two Committees appointed on the 26th April last, relative to charges against Dr. Pryor, be appointed to represent the Church before the Council relative to the first two subjects for their consideration.

Moved by Bro. King, seconded by Bro. Rand, and *resolved*, That Deacon Parker, Bro. Robinson, and the Clerk, be appointed to represent the Church relative to the third subject to be discussed before the Council.

Adjourned.

The letters contained in the above minutes were duly forwarded to the respective parties to whom they are addressed.

August 5th, 1867.

The following resolution was moved by Bro. Rand, seconded by Bro. King, and passed :—

Whereas, The Church has been informed that the Rev. Dr. Pryor stated publicly, at the Central Association, that he had repeatedly urged this Church to call a Council, and that the Church had refused him the same, (which statement was re-iterated by the Rev. Dr. Crawley).

And whereas, The Church has been informed that its delegates, Deacons S. Selden and R. N. Beckwith, made reply that such statement was untrue—that Dr. Pryor had not asked the Church for a Council, and that the Church did not refuse to grant a Council to consider *all* the charges against Dr. Pryor.

Therefore resolved, That this Church affirms that the only occasion on which a proposal for a Council was made to a meeting of the Church, was at the last meeting (held May 30th,) called to pass upon the charges arising out of Dr. Pryor's transactions with Miss Vass, when Deacon Johnston moved an amendment to the resolution then pending, to the effect that the matter be referred by the Church to a Council, and such resolution having been seconded, certain members of the Church stated that they would support said amendment provided the mover would consent to include also the charge in relation to Mrs. McMillan, as the two cases, in their judgment, were very closely related to each other, too much so to be considered entirely apart; and as also the course which had been pursued by the Church, in relation to the charges in the case of Mrs. McMillan, had been characterized as arbitrary, vindictive, uncharitable, unjust and unchristian, but Deacon Johnston refused to include both cases in his amendment, stating that one case had been already disposed of, and should not be again discussed,—whereupon his amendment was negatived.

And whereas, It has come to the knowledge of this Church that the assertion, that a Council was refused by it, was founded upon an interview had between the Deacons and Dr. Pryor at the house of Deacon Nutting.

Therefore resolved, That the Deacons be requested to furnish to the Clerk of the Church a written statement of overtures made, if any, to them at said meeting by Dr. Pryor, for a Council; and that the Clerk file such statements with the documents of this Church.

Resolved further, That this Church affirms that at its meeting (May 10) next following the meeting above referred to, at which Dr. Pryor was present the greater portion of the evening, and which was convened specially to pass finally upon the charge against Dr. Pryor in relation to Mrs. McMillan, no proposal was made by Dr. Pryor, the Deacons, or other member of the Church, for a Council to advise upon the charge then under consideration.

STATEMENTS FURNISHED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE ABOVE RESOLUTION.

On Wednesday, May 8th, 1867, there was a meeting of the Deacons of the Granville Street Church with the two Committees appointed to investigate the charges against Dr. Pryor, at the residence of Deacon Nutting, at which meeting Dr. Pryor was present.

After the two Committees had read their reports and retired, the Deacons and Dr. Pryor remained to consult as to future proceedings. In the course of conversation, to the best of my recollection, Deacon Johnston suggested a Council for the consideration of the matters contained in the charges. Dr. Pryor was asked if such a procedure would meet with his concurrence, and replied that it would; and that he would leave the matter, or would like to act in the matter as the brethren thought best.

During the consultation the names of some of the brethren, who it was

thought would make judicious members of the contemplated Council, were suggested, and their qualifications discussed. We left Deacon Nutting's with the understanding that a Council would be called, or rather that the office-bearers would recommend such a course to the Church for its adoption.

The next morning I called at the office of Deacon Selden, and ascertained from him that such a recommendation would not meet with the approval of a number of the members, and that an unanimous vote could not, therefore, be obtained if a resolution to that effect were laid before the Church.

Deacon Selden, with a view to obtain entire harmony of action, (which, up to this period, had characterized the meetings of the Church,) had commenced the preparation of a preamble and resolution having relation only to the case of Mrs. McMillan, in the maturing of which he was subsequently assisted by Deacon Nutting; and on the evening of that day a number of brethren were informally asked to meet in the small vestry to hear and consider it. The subject-matter of the document was discussed freely and at length, and those brethren then present agreed to use their endeavors to have it carried without division. As Judge Johnston was not present on the occasion just referred to, the brethren there assembled requested Deacon Selden and myself to wait upon him, for the purpose of obtaining his approval of the preamble and resolution which had been prepared.

I called upon Deacon Johnston the day following, and informed him of the position of matters as regards the contemplated Council, and the reasons for altering the arrangement previously made; stating at the same time, as nearly as I could recollect, the ideas embodied in the preamble and resolution.

Deacon Johnston and I then arranged to meet Mr. Selden at my house the same afternoon, when the document having been shown him, (Deacon Johnston) he took exception to some of the expressions and statements contained therein, which, at his suggestion, were omitted or modified, and as then finally matured it was presented to the Church at its meeting on the evening of that day. I may add, that Deacon Johnston (and, indeed, such was my own feeling) did not, by any means, approve of the change of procedure in reference to the Council, but moved, as I believed, with an earnest desire to have unanimity in the Church, he consented to the action as above detailed.

D. MCN. PARKER.

The foregoing is, to the best of our recollection, a correct statement of the proceedings in reference to the meetings and resolution referred to.

August 6th, 1867.

S. SELDEN,
R. N. BECKWITH.

My recollection of what passed at the Deacon's meeting at my house, above referred to, is very indistinct. I do not recollect who proposed a Council, or anything more than that there was some general conversation on the subject; nor do I remember that it was agreed that it should be recommended to the Church to call a Council.

J. W. NUTTING.

SIR,—I make the following statements and observations in connection with subjects treated of in the preambles and resolutions, with a copy of which you furnished me at my request; as well as in reply to the desire of the Church, that I should furnish a "written statement of overtures made, if any," to the Deacons, at a meeting at Mr. Nutting's, by Dr. Pryor, for a Council.

At the meeting at Mr. Nutting's alluded to, the calling of a Council of Ministers was suggested by me. Dr. Pryor at once concurred, and the proposal met with general acceptance. Mr. Beckwith at first expressed reluctance, but he presently acquiesced. The conversation then turned on persons

who would be suitable, and at easy distance, and many were named. The discussion concerning the members of the Council was harmonious, and altogether free from antagonism, and we parted with the expressed declaration that the Deacons should recommend to the Church at its approaching meeting the calling of a Council on all the matters charged against Dr. Pryor.

Dr. Pryor's desire that a Council should be called, was heartily and earnestly expressed; there was nothing to lead me to suppose that the disposition of the Deacons in favour of the measure was not sincere; and the engagement was one from which neither party could, with propriety, recede without the consent of the other, except on some imperative reason.

I beg that it be remembered that at that time the reports of the Committees, with the evidence, had not been presented to the Church, and that the appointment of a Council then, might have prevented their publicity, until after judicious and impartial brethren had considered the whole case;—a thing surely not undesirable in view of the interests of religion, and certainly very important to Dr. Pryor, as tending to avoid hasty and premature opinions to his prejudice. The Deacons, without the consent of Dr. Pryor, failed to carry out this engagement.

On the afternoon before the Church was to meet, Mr. Selden and Dr. Parker informed me that the intention of calling a Council had been abandoned, in consequence of the opposition that prevailed among members of the Church. It was mentioned as a reason assigned by some, that one of the charges against Dr. Pryor being connected with accounts,—a subject that ministers were not generally qualified to deal with,—and a Council therefore being inappropriate for that matter, it was not thought expedient to call one on the other charge. Mr. Selden and Dr. Parker also mentioned that after the meeting at Mr. Nutting's, there had been a meeting of Deacons, and the two committees, (of which I had not had any knowledge), and that resolutions had been prepared to be moved at the approaching Church meeting, which they then came to submit to me; and they spoke in such connection that I clearly understood that the proposal for a Council had been over-ruled at that meeting, and these resolutions then substituted. On a future occasion, one or more of the members of the Committee denied that at the meeting referred to, the proposal for a Council had been considered. Dr. Parker seemed to admit this; and explained that the opposition to a Council which he and Mr. Selden had referred to, came from members of the Church, irrespective of that meeting.

It is unnecessary that I should insist on the impression plainly made on my mind by the communication of these two Deacons; nor is it necessary to enquire whether they obtained their knowledge of the existence of opposition to the calling of a Council at a meeting, or by individual intercourse with members, nor whether the opposition was more or less universal; it is enough that Mr. Selden and Dr. Parker considered the opposition existing in the Church to the calling of a Council to be such as to justify them in abandoning that measure, notwithstanding their arrangement with Dr. Pryor.

This communication filled me with surprise and perplexity, and after short reflection, I saw no course left but to accept the resolution which they submitted to me touching the charge of immoral conduct. It was confined to the dissolving of the pastoral relation. I knew that the power of the Church in that particular could not be long resisted; and Mr. Selden and Dr. Parker assured me that in drawing that resolution the intention had been to reject any imputation of guilt, and to ground it solely on the fact of indiscretion. As I read it, that seemed its necessary construction, and it was amended and made more explicit in that respect at a subsequent meeting of the Church. Having consented to this disposal of that charge, I suggested the leaving out of needless preambles, and some modifications in form. This concurrence has been used disingenuously since.

When the Church met in the evening, this resolution was passed, and I supposed that the charge against Dr. Pryor, on which it was founded, had been, as far as the Church was concerned, finally disposed of. The charge connected with Miss Vass' accounts stood over, and was not brought to a conclusion until several weeks after, when certain mistakes and incorrect charges made by Dr. Pryor on both sides of the account, having been ascertained, the question for the Church was narrowed to a single point, viz., whether the incorrect charges made to Miss Vass' prejudice, had been made by Dr. Pryor knowingly and fraudulently. I believed, and urged on the Church, that the facts did not warrant the assumption of a fraudulent purpose;—failing in this, I besought them to submit that question to a Council, rather than venture themselves on the hazardous responsibility of undertaking to read the heart, and condemn a brother on such an issue;—and surely none can be better qualified for a question of that nature than ministers. I again failed. My motion for a Council was negative 12 to 8, and then followed a vote of condemnation on the main question, by which Dr. Pryor was degraded and worse than excluded.

On my motion for a Council, Dr. Parker declared his assent, provided both charges were included; in this he was followed by some others, and I believe he and they voted in the minority. I had made my motion for a Council with the concurrence of Dr. Pryor, but I had no authority to either reject or accept such a condition on his part, and my own nature revolted against its injustice. I did not, therefore, agree to it; but I am far from being aware that this was the ground on which my resolution was rejected, as would seem to be suggested in the Church record I am considering. There was manifested on that and former occasions great repugnance to the calling of a Council at all; and I believe any motion for a Council would have been negative unless, perhaps, the satisfaction of bringing up the first charge against Dr. Pryor might have prevailed over that repugnance with a sufficient number. It cannot be forgotten how much the ability of Granville Street Church, to deal with the questions, was spoken of in contrast with anything that was to be expected from a Council of ministers.

This condition, under protest of which a Council was on this occasion denied, affords manifest evidence of the malign disposition of the active agents in these transactions toward their late pastor, and of their callous indifference to the feelings of those members of the Church who were closely related to him.

Dr. Pryor might have demanded a review of the case—the Association might require it—but the Church having once fulfilled its function, tenderness, conciliation and brotherly kindness, forbade its voluntary resumption of a duty that ought to have been a painful one. Not only were these Christian principles violated, but the plain claim of justice was trampled under foot by this act. To renew the consideration of a charge on which the Church had already passed sentence, and in relation to which they had inflicted punishment, was a violation of a fundamental principle of British justice, and I presume gospel principle is not less consistent than human laws; it was especially unjust and unreasonable in regard to Dr. Pryor, because he had been more than willing to have a Council on both charges, and had been denied that Council when it might have been essentially useful. As regarded myself, it was a flagrant breach of good faith, inasmuch as I had agreed to the resolution dismissing Dr. Pryor from his pastorate on the express understanding that guilt was not imputed, and on the necessarily implied understanding that the charge involved in that resolution was by it finally disposed of. The reason assigned for this injustice—that the two cases were closely related, &c.—is without just foundation; and if it were true in fact, could not justify the violation of the principles I have mentioned.

At a Church meeting since the late Central Association, a discussion having arisen as to contradictory statements respecting the calling of a Council,

made at the Association. by Dr. Pryor Messrs. Selden and Beckwith, after hearing the explanations made, I charged those two deacons with having been guilty of disingenuously misleading the Association by the suppression of the truth. Mr. Beckwith declared that he would not be satisfied until that charge had been cleared away. I was not present at the Church meeting, when the resolutions and preambles under consideration were passed, but judging from their tenor they are designed for this clearing away.

I am sorry to be obliged to say that this Church record is of precisely the same disingenuous nature, as were the statements of the two deacons. The artifice consists in asserting a fact which is true, but from which an inference arises that is inconsistent with the truth, when all the facts are known. The whole document partakes of this character. The last resolution is a flagrant example. It runs thus :

“Resolved further, That this Church affirms that at its meeting (May 10) next following the meeting of the deacons above referred to, at which Dr. Pryor was present the greater part of the evening, and which was convened specially to pass finally upon the charge against Dr. Pryor in relation to Mrs. McMillan, no proposal was made by Dr. Pryor, the deacons, or other members of the Church for a Council to advise upon the charges under consideration.”

Here is a strong affirmation, such as is used when a fact is controverted. and the affirmation is made in relation to the contention, whether a Council had been desired and denied, and in that connection the necessary inference is that a Council, not having been asked, it had not been denied ; and the further inference may reasonably be made from such an affirmation, in such a connection, that had it been asked, a Council would have been granted. Such are the inferences which any stranger to the circumstances would draw. Such are the inferences that this Church record, as it stands, will carry on its face for time to come. Here stands the condemnation of Dr. Pryor's statement ; here is the vindication of the statements of deacons Selden and Beckwith ; and yet these inferences are all false, and were known to be false when the resolutions were passed. The members of the Church who passed these preambles and resolutions, knew that it was not asserted that any application had been made at the Church meeting alluded to for a Council, and that the affirmation was uncalled for, and illusory ; but they knew also, some of them as parties in the transactions, and others from explanations made in their hearing, the reason why it had not been moved ; for they knew that a Council had been desired and agreed upon, and that the agreement to move for a Council made by the Deacons had not been acted upon, because of the repugnance and opposition existing among the members of the Church, to the calling of a Council ; and they knew that in consequence of such opposition, a different course had been followed at the meeting from that previously agreed upon. Knowing all this, the two Deacons Selden and Beckwith having at the Association concealed, and misrepresented the truth under verbal evasions, the Church members who have united in this church record now seek to justify them by the same means, making truth the servant of falsehood. They ask what “overtures” Dr. Pryor made for a Council. It may be said he made none, but nevertheless he desired and agreed to a Council. With confident boldness they assert, he never applied for a Council to “a meeting of the Church,” yet he agreed with the Deacons, that they should move for, and recommend one to the Church. They raise the inference that he was never refused a Council, and that it might have been had for asking, when the Council was not moved for, only because of the opposition to it existing in the Church. Surely these Church members have to learn the first lessons on the nature of truth.

Let the members of Granville Street Church remember that as often as they represent or insinuate under any pretext or form of expression, that Dr. Pryor failed to have a Council, because he did not desire it, and not because the

Church would not have it, they brand their own deacons, Selden and Parker, with fraud and falsehood in their communications with me. There is no escape from the dilemma. If there was no insuperable or serious obstacle in the way of a Council, owing to opposition in the Church, then I was grossly deceived and Dr. Pryor was grossly defrauded. On the other hand, if those deacons did not deceive me, then it is a fact that Dr. Pryor, having desired a Council on both charges, at an early stage of the proceedings, one was not moved for, and had, because of objections against a Council prevailing among members of the Church. But I believe those Deacons in that instance did not deceive me. I believe as well from what they told me, as from what I heard and saw myself afterwards, that there was in the Church a wide-spread opposition to a Council, and any attempt to elude that fact is but a warring against the truth, all the more despicable when cloaked under verbal evasions.

After a Council had in effect been denied when both charges were open for consideration; after a Council was denied on one, when one only remained for decision; after having wreaked the power of the Church and done an injury that no Council can now fully repair, these Church members had the boldness to call an *ex parte* Council; and long since, casting off the attitude of impartial judges and the calm dignity and just consideration of a Church of Christ, they have pursued a stricken man, struggling in an unequal contest, with the virulent spirit of inflamed partizans.

Oh, that they had acted in a nobler, higher spirit and Cristian temper, and under a wiser discretion! How much of agony to a suffering man, and his family, and relatives had been mitigated—how much of rending of the Church had been spared!

In giving this narrative of the facts, I have gone further than the request contained in your first note, but I have not gone beyond the matters introduced into the Church record I have been considering, nor further, either in the facts or declarations, than is proper for vindicating the truth. I have to request that this communication may be entered on the Church record—not be merely filed with the documents of the Church as your note professes.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. W. JOHNSTON.

To B. H. EATON, Esq., *Clerk of the Granville Street Baptist Church.*

August 29th, 1867.

PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL.

The Council invited in accordance with the resolution of July 12th, consisting of Rev. Dr. Spurden, Rev. J. Davis, Rev. Charles Randall, and brethren T. R. Pattillo and William Faulkner, met in the vestry of the Granville Street Baptist Church, at 11 o'clock, A. M., on Thursday, August 8th, 1867. The following is the record of their proceedings:—

TO THE GRANVILLE STREET CHURCH, &c., &c.

In answer to the call received from you, we met in the vestry of Granville Street Church on Thursday, August 8th. After we had organized, read portions of Scripture and engaged in prayer, before we proceeded to any business His Honor Judge Johnston, on behalf of Dr. Pryor, read a letter signed by the Dr., a copy of which was presented to each one of us, accompanied by remarks assuming that we came with the intention of condemning Dr. Pryor and justifying the Church. His Honor then asked, in the name of Dr. Pryor, on what authority we met, what representations had been made to us to induce us to come, and the object for which we came. In reply we complained of the wrong done to us by Dr. Pryor, in assuming that we had met to condemn him;

that there was nothing in our past conduct, nor in our relations to Dr. Pryor—in fact there was no evidence to justify the assumption. In reply to the Judge's questions, we stated, that the resolution of the Church of 12th July, (which was read) was our authority for meeting, that no representations beyond that resolution had been made to us, and that the objects to which we should direct our attention would be for our subsequent consideration. At our next meeting we asked for all letters from Dr. Pryor and resolutions of the Church subsequent to the 12th of July. Dr. P.'s letters of the 17th and 25th of July were laid before us, and the action of the Church rejecting the proposal contained in the letter, viz., that all relatives of Dr. P., and of any member of that portion of the Church who had taken part in these proceedings, be excluded from the Council, provided the number be increased to twelve.

The Committee of the Church explained to us that when the Church rejected that proposal all the arrangements were finally concluded with regard to the present Council; and they were not disposed to throw everything into confusion by attempting to alter their course, especially when so large a number as twelve was contained in the proposal.

The suggestion was made by us, whether an arrangement for a Council, according to the terms of the resolution of the Central Association, might not be made; the Committee stated that it would be useless to recommend such a course to the Church, after the failure stated in their resolution of 12th July.

Dr. P.'s letter to us, referred to above, contains the following passages,—“It is not, however, my object in this paper to discuss any question between the Church and myself. My purpose is to protest against your authority, to deal with anything affecting my character or interests.” “I shall not, nor shall any one on my behalf, or with my consent, appear before you, in any respect, to sanction your proceedings, should you venture to act; and I formally forbid your doing anything by which my character or interests may be affected either directly or indirectly.” “I beg you to be assured that in the course I now pursue, I design no personal offence or disrespect to you, or any one of you. I repeat, my earnest desire is, that a mutual Council be called, of such weight for numbers and the character of its members as may command respect within and without the denomination here and abroad. In the nomination of such a Council the Church would not be debarred from offering your names, while the mere common justice would be awarded me of having a voice in the selection of the men who were to pass judgment on interests dearer to me and my family than life itself, or any earthly consideration.”

Uninfluenced by any other consideration than the fact that Dr. P. declined, in the strongest terms, to meet us, we laid down the broad principle of justice so admirably laid down by the Roman Governor Festus,—“It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die before that he who is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.” As Dr. Pryor would not appear before us, we did not see how we could investigate the charges against him without violating that principle. The Committee of the Church asked us to allow them to shew cause why we should proceed to investigate the charges against Dr. Pryor.

This we could not deny them, seeing we had a letter before us from Dr. Pryor, and had listened to the remarks of Judge Johnston asking us for the authority under which we met. The question was then argued. Our authority from the Church was pointed out. To this we agreed. The impartial character of the Council was insisted on. This we affirmed. It was then urged that if charges were made against any one, and he refused to plead, judgment must go by default. This we admitted, provided the validity of the tribunal were unexceptionable; but we were not a Council chosen in the way recommended by the Association; in a literal, though not in any bad sense, we were an *ex parte* Council, that is, we were chosen by the Church only and not mutually

chosen by Dr. Pryor and the Church. If we proceeded to investigate in the absence of Dr. Pryor, our decision would justly be open to the charge of a decision founded on *ex parte* evidence, and would not have the weight which a decision arrived at by a Council chosen mutually would have.

The Committee then urged that very serious charges of cruelty and injustice were made against them, that they were desirous of an opportunity of clearing themselves, and wished to ascertain the views of the Council respecting the investigation of their proceedings in Dr. Pryor's case. The discussion on this point continued until adjournment on Thursday evening.

On Friday morning, after consultation by themselves, the Council agreed to address the following letter to Dr. Pryor :—

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned, composing a Council convened at the call of the Granville Street Church, have received a letter from you addressed to each of us. We beg to assure you that we are not animated by any feeling of partizanship; we come from a distance, two of us from other provinces, and are under the influence of the kindest feelings towards yourself.

The terms of your letter to us forbid us to hope that you will meet with us for the purpose of entering upon a thorough investigation of the charges made against your character, and thus availing yourself of the opportunity afforded by an impartial Council, of substantiating your innocence.

Our object in writing to you is to ascertain whether you will consent to such a mutual Council, both in regard to the number of its members and its mode of selection, as we may, in our judgment, advise.

We request an answer at your earliest convenience; and if you would favour us with a personal interview, we shall be happy to see you."

Signed by each member of the Council.

This letter was despatched to Dr. Pryor before we adjourned for dinner.

At the afternoon session, in order that time might not be lost while we were waiting for the Dr.'s reply, we discussed the following question with the brethren,—Were we willing to enquire into the following points?

1. The question relating to the calling of Councils.
2. The mode of procedure on the part of the Church whether it was regular, &c.
3. Whether the decision of the Church, in the circumstances in which they were placed and in the light of the evidence before them, were not such as they ought to have given.

In reply to the above, the following minute was recorded, and a copy of it handed to the Committee :—

That we were not prepared to investigate the charges against Dr. Pryor, because Dr. P. declines to meet with us, and we cannot, therefore, make the full and searching enquiry into the subject which we think necessary to the delivery of an impartial decision.

We are prepared to enquire into the proceedings of the Church, in relation to Dr. Pryor's case, as far as it involves the following particulars, viz. :—

1. The question relating to the call of Council through every stage of the proceedings.
2. The mode in which the Church proceeded in Dr. Pryor's case; whether they awarded him every facility for vindicating himself that could fairly be claimed.

In the evening the Council received a reply from Dr. Pryor, to which the following answer was sent early the following morning :—

Vestry, Saturday, 7 o'clock, A. M.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—As it is possible, from the tenor of your reply to our letter of yesterday's date, that you misunderstood our intention in the request we made, allow us to amend our enquiry by asking whether you will confer with us either in person or by letter, for the purpose of agreeing upon both the number of members and mode of selection of a Council, to be mutually chosen by yourself and the Church.

An answer by the bearer will oblige.

Signed by each member of the Council.

In answer to the above the following letter was received from Dr. Pryor :

Halifax, August 10th, 1867.

DEAR BRETHREN,—In reply to your note of this morning, I beg leave to say that I have not the slightest objection to meet you as my brethren in your individual capacity, to converse and advise with you on the subject referred to in your note. I will meet with you as the friends of the Church just as I would with the Church itself, to consult respecting a mutual Council. I will meet with you at any hour you appoint, either at my own house, or at your lodgings, or any other place except the vestry. I except the vestry lest the character of our meeting be misunderstood. Yours very truly,

J. PRYOR.

The members of the Council resolved to meet Dr. P. at his own house according to the terms of his letters, and immediately proceeded thither. After conversation with Dr. P. and Judge Johnston, we received from Dr. P. a decided answer that his number, twelve, was his ultimatum ; a number by no means too large in his own opinion when the interests at stake were considered.

We have reported to you the proposal of Dr. P. without offering any advice thereon.

Dear brethren, we await your decision, and shall be happy to render you any further assistance in our power.

In reply to the above we received the report of the Church, which is recorded in the minutes of their proceedings, August 12th, 1867, a copy of which we handed to Dr. Pryor accompanied with the following letter:—

Halifax, August 12th, 1867.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—We beg leave to inform you that we reported your proposition, concerning a Council, to the Granville St. Church, and we now enclose a resolution adopted by them, in relation thereto, this evening, from which you will see that they have concurred in a Council of twelve, to be nominated according to the plan proposed by yourself.

We have to request that you will name the earliest possible hour to-morrow morning for us to wait on you, to obtain the list of brethren whom you wish to nominate.

Signed by each member of the Council.

We agreed to meet at nine o'clock next morning for the list of names. The next day (August 13th) Dr. P. waited on us, and read a letter asking for a copy of the communication from us to the Church, referred to in their resolution. We handed him a copy of our report to the Church, August 12th.

Dr. P's. letter, containing the list of names, was read. The brethren nominated by him were—

Rev. I. E. Bill, St. John, N. B.

Rev. W. S. McKenzie, St. John, N. B.

Rev. George Armstrong, Bridgetown.

Rev. A. S. Hunt, Cornwallis.

Bro. James Rand, Canning.

Bro. Ambrose Dodge, Wilmot.

A copy of the above list was then handed to the Clerk of the Church, August 14th.

Vestry, Granville Street Church.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—It was yesterday ascertained by telegraph that the Rev. I. E. Bill could not come to Halifax immediately, and that the Rev. W. McKenzie is certainly in the United States. Under these circumstances the proposed Council cannot meet till after the Convention.

The earliest day on which it could be assembled is Thursday, the 29th inst., and as that day would be most convenient for all the members of the Council who may attend the Convention, we propose the 29th inst. for the meeting of said Council. Will you be so kind as to inform us, at your earliest convenience, whether you agree to our proposal as to the day of meeting.

Signed on behalf of us,

J. DAVIS.

To the above we received the following reply:—

DEAR BRETHREN,—Although I have not had the opportunity of consulting the brethren whom I have named in the Council, yet I think that the time named, viz., 29th Aug., will probably suit their convenience. I will write at once and ascertain this. If anything should require to be altered with reference to the day, I will communicate with you on the subject.

I shall be prepared to name the day definitely as soon as I can get an answer from St. John.

Yours truly,

J. PRYOR.

To this letter we replied:—

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—We have received your reply to our letter of this morning's date. If you will please refer to that letter you will find that we simply ask you to inform us whether you agree to our proposal, that the 29th inst. be named as the day for the Council to meet.

Be so kind as to furnish us with a definite reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours, &c.,

J. DAVIS.

August 14th.

On behalf of the brethren.

This procured for us the following definite reply:—

DEAR BRETHREN,—With reference to the 29th of August, as the suitable time for the meeting of the Council, I beg leave to say that I fully agree to that time for holding the Council, though, of course, not having communicated with the brethren whom I have named on the Council, I cannot say how far it will suit them, but I do not apprehend any difficulty to prevent their meeting at that time.

Yours truly,

J. DAVIS.

Having thus made all preparatory arrangements for the summoning of a Council chosen according to the terms of the resolution of the N. S. Central Association, we left the matter in the hands of the brethren to carry them out.

C SPURDEN, *Sec'y. of the Council.*

August 12th, 1867.

Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and approved.

The following letter from the Council, now convened in connection with the case of Dr. Pryor, was read and received.

[NOTE.—This letter has been lost. It contained Dr. Pryor's ultimatum to the effect that he would agree to a Council of twelve—six to be chosen by

him and six by the Church—four ministers and two laymen by each party—"the relatives of Dr. Pryor and of any member of that portion of the Church who has taken part in these proceedings heretofore conducted by you to be excluded."]

Whereupon the following resolution was moved by the Clerk, seconded by Bro. Robinson, and passed:—

On hearing read the communication, dated the 12th inst., from the ministers and brethren composing the Council now convened,

Resolved,—1. That in the earnest hope that no further obstacle will interpose to prevent a most thorough and impartial investigation, in the presence of Dr. Pryor, of *all* the subjects mentioned in their resolution of the 12th ult., the Church accept the ultimatum of Dr. Pryor, and proceed at once to increase the present number of the Council to twelve; the class of persons and the manner of choosing them to be as contained in said communication.

2. That in addition to the present number on said Council, viz.,—Revds. J. Davis, Dr. Spurden and Charles Randall, and T. R. Pattillo and William Faulkner, Esqrs., they choose Rev. S. March of Bridgewater.

3. That the Church will provide for all expenses connected with the attendance of that portion only of the Council chosen by them.

4. That the Council be requested to forward immediately to Dr. Pryor a copy of this resolution; to determine with Dr. Pryor the earliest possible day for the re-assembling of additional members; to procure from Dr. Pryor the names of the six persons selected by him, and to inform at once the Clerk of the Church of the names obtained and the day determined on; and the Clerk of the Church, upon the receipt of the same, is directed to communicate by telegraph with the persons named.

5. That the Council be requested to defer any investigation until the result of the foregoing concessions shall be known.

It was also *resolved* that in the event of Rev. S. March being unable to come the Deacons and Clerk choose another person in his stead.

Then adjourned.

On the 13th of August the Clerk was put in possession of the names of the persons selected by Dr. Pryor. The name of Rev. A. S. Hunt was immediately returned to Dr. Pryor, objected to on the ground of relationship; but Dr. Pryor immediately explained that Mr. Hunt was not his relative, and his name was accepted. These six persons and Mr. March were then immediately telegraphed to come to Halifax with all despatch to sit on the Council. During the day a telegram was received from Rev. Mr. Bill as follows,—“Utterly impossible to leave home to night. Mr. McKenzie not here.” The assembling of the Council previous to the Convention about to be held at Wilmot being, under these circumstances, evidently impracticable, telegrams were sent the day following (Aug. 14) to the seven brethren above alluded to, asking them not to come. It was then arranged by the Council with Dr. Pryor that *August 29th* should be the day for the assembling of the Council. A brief Circular was sent to the seven new Councillors, inviting them to be present on the 29th of August, and the resolutions of July 12th and August 12th were enclosed to them.

Eleven of those who were to compose the Council assembled in Granville Street Church on the 29th of August, together with A. M. Wheelock, Esq., of Wilmot. It was stated that Mr. Ambrose Dodge was not able to attend, and that Mr. Wheelock was here to take his place. He was immediately invited by the Church to take a seat in the Council, and the resolutions of July 12th and August 12th were then placed in his hands.

The Council having organized, by choosing Rev. C. Spurden, D.D., President, and Rev. W. S. McKenzie, Secretary, the Church were asked if they accepted the Council as then organized. The Church replied in the affirma-

tive, the Council to take as their basis of and authority for action the resolutions of July 12th and August 12th.

The Council closed their labors on the 5th of September, and a meeting of the Church was called on the evening of that day, at the request of the Council, to receive their Decision, the minutes of which meeting are as follows :

September 5th, 1867.

Church meeting called at request of the Council. Deacon Selden in the chair. The brethren engaged in prayer and exhortation in the vestry till a quarter before nine o'clock, when the Council requested their attendance in the Church.

Rev. Charles Randall read a hymn, after the singing of which the Rev. John Davis read the 122nd and 133rd Psalms, and Rev. A. S. Hunt prayed. Rev. Dr. Spurden then read the Decision of the Council, whereof the following is a copy :—

DECISION OF THE COUNCIL.

This Council having been called by the Church in this place in conjunction with their late Pastor, to consider certain difficulties which have arisen between him and them, and having given prolonged, patient, and prayerful attention to all the matters which have been placed before them, and to the testimony and arguments in relation to these matters, deliver their judgment herein, in manner and form as follows :

FIRST ALLEGATION.—"That Dr. Pryor is guilty of immorality and gross impropriety in regard to Mrs. Minetta McMillan, and Mrs. Rachel Morgan, (formerly Dr. Pryor's servant girl)."

Resolved 1.—That in the opinion of this Council, Dr. Pryor is not guilty of immorality as charged in the Allegation : yet it is at the same time, the opinion of this Council that Dr. Pryor has shewn great want of discretion in the character of his visits to Mrs. McMillan.

Resolved 2.—That in the absence of all evidence in the case of Mrs. Rachel Morgan, the Council dismiss said case.

SECOND ALLEGATION.—"That Dr. Pryor is guilty of dishonest and fraudulent dealings in conducting the affairs of Miss Ann Vass, (a member of Granville Street Baptist Church)."

Resolved 1.—That the Council acquit Dr. Pryor of dishonest and fraudulent intent in his dealings as the agent of Miss Vass : but they are of the opinion that it was most unwise in him to undertake the management of her accounts at all, and that he is chargeable with incompetency in keeping accounts, and culpable negligence in not preserving vouchers.

THIRD.—The action of the Church. *Viz. :*

Whether the action of the Church relative to the charges before referred to, and to Dr. Pryor, was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances, and if not, why not, and what course the Church should have adopted.

The Council find that the Church has been accused of precipitancy in virtually suspending Dr. Pryor from the exercise of his public duties on the occurrence of the unhappy incident in Pleasant Street.

Resolved 1.—That the Council is of opinion, that in view of the circumstances forced upon the Church, and for the consideration of which time could not then be obtained, the Deacons, whatever mistakes they may have committed in the discharge of the duties suddenly devolved upon them, ought not to be charged with the want of affection on account of such mistakes : it nevertheless might have been better, if the Deacons had sought a personal interview with Dr. Pryor, and consulted with him in reference to the services of the approaching Sabbath.

The Council further find that the Church is regarded as blameable for having refused to call a Council at an earlier period in the history of this whole case.

Resolved—That the Council are not able to decide upon this particular question. But in relation to the whole matter of calling a Council in critical cases of a difficult nature between Pastor and people, we are of opinion that for the interests of all parties concerned, an advisory Council will generally be found desirable, and that such a procedure is in harmony with the practice of the Churches in these Provinces.

Resolved—That in relation to the suspension of Dr. Pryor on the charge of fraudulent transactions in the affairs of Miss Vass, the Council is of opinion, after a careful examination of the whole matter, in relation to which the Council has already delivered its decision, that it would be advisable for the Church to reconsider their action thereon.

Such is the judgment on all the above points at which this Council has arrived. They would have desired to add a few sentences, embodying thoughts and counsels, suggested by the matters which have come before them. The time at their disposal however forbids this. They may utter somewhat in the above way, but cannot write anything further. They can only commend the late Pastor of this Church, with its Deacons and members to the care and guidance of the great Head of the Church. May He counsel, direct, and dispose them to all that is well pleasing in His sight, and beneficial to His cause. May He render the efforts of the Council which is now about to be dissolved conducive to these great ends. May He at last bring us all to the world of purity, and rest. The members of this Council will not then regret the toil which they have at this time been led to devote to the cause of Christ in this place, and in Heaven we shall all rejoice together in the result of our common labors, and in the salvation of our common Lord.

(Signed.) CHARLES SPURDEN, Fredericton, N. B., *President*.
 GEORGE ARMSTRONG, Bridgetown, N. S., *Secretary*.
 JOHN DAVIS, Charlottetown, P. E. I.
 I. E. BILL, St. John, N. B.
 A. S. HUNT, Cornwallis, N. S.
 CHARLES RANDALL, Weymouth, N. S.
 STEPHEN MARCH, Bridgewater, N. S.
 T. R. PATTILLO, Liverpool, N. S.
 JAMES E. RAND, Cornwallis, N. S.
 W. FAULKNER, Truro, N. S.
 ABEL M. WHEELLOCK, Wilmot, N. S.

HALIFAX, September 5th, 1867.

Deacon Johnston moved, and Deacon Selden seconded, that a vote of thanks be passed to the Council for their labors bestowed in investigating the matters brought before them. The resolution was put and several brethren voted in the negative, on the ground that they would, by voting for the motion, compromise themselves in regard to the Decision of the Council; but it having been explained that the motion was simply to thank the Council for their labors and not to accept in any way their decision, the motion was again put, and carried unanimously.

Rev. I. E. Bill and Rev. J. Davis addressed the meeting. The President of the Council made some remarks in regard to certain points in the evidence.

The meeting closed by the singing of the doxology, and the benediction by Dr. Spurden.

During the above meeting the Clerk of the Church asked the Council whether their minutes of evidence and proceedings would be handed to the Church with their decision; to which question no definite reply was then given.

The Clerk enquired next day of Dr. Spurden whether their minutes of evidence and proceedings would not be left with the Church, and was given to understand that they would be.

The next day the Clerk addressed the following note to the Secretary of the Council:—

Halifax, September 7th, 1867.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I find, in looking over my papers, that there are several papers put in by the Church which I have not got back. Among them are Deacon Johnston's letter of August 29th; a resolution put in first day of your meeting; and some others.

I suppose you have them. If so, would you be good enough to leave them with me, or inform me where I can get them.

Dr. Spurden informed me that the minutes of Council would be left with me with the evidence taken by the Secretaries. I would be greatly obliged if you would leave these latter with the papers first mentioned where I may get them.

Yours, &c.,

REV. GEO. ARMSTRONG, *Sec'y., &c.*

B. H. EATON.

R E P L Y.

Halifax, September 7th, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR,—I sent you resolutions of the Church by ———. I now forward Deacon Johnston's letter of the 29th August. The minutes of Council, as I understand the matter, belong to the Council, and are not designed for any other body.

Neither the Chairman nor the meeting gave me any direction to deliver them to the Church or its representatives.

As for the evidence, each member took it for himself, and of course is entitled to retain it. No one was appointed to do it officially. My own notes of evidence are considerably full; they were, however, written very hastily, and are in no condition to be seen except to compare with those taken by members of Council. The letter I now enclose could not be found when ——— called; I am happy to supply it now. So far as I know, this is the only document belonging to you or the Church which I have in my possession.

Respectfully yours,

B. H. EATON, Esq.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

R E P L Y.

Halifax, September 9th, 1867.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to enclose an extract from Crowell's Church Directory, by which you will see clearly what course that eminent authority considers a Council should take in regard to their minutes. Of course I cannot repeat my request in regard to the evidence, seeing it was not taken officially. As to the minutes of Council, it is now entirely for you to say whether you will adopt the practice as laid down by Crowell. All the Church has received is the "Decision of the Council." They are, therefore, in this position. They read your decision. It may or may not differ from what they expected. If it does so differ, they wish to know by what steps you arrived at it, so that they may be able to decide conscientiously whether they ought to abide by it or not. I may say that if you wish to preserve the minutes I would undertake to return them to you in a few days. Please inform me what is your pleasure.

Yours truly,

REV. GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

B. H. EATON.

EXTRACT REFERRED TO.

"If the business be to investigate charges against a minister, a record should be kept of all the evidence and of the decision of the Council. In every case the doings of the Council, signed by the Moderator and Clerk, should be entered on the records of the Church by whose vote it was convened. A similar course would be proper in case of a Council convened to assist in constituting a Church.

REPLY.

Dartmouth, Night, September 9th, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR,—I received your note late this evening, and have only a short time to transcribe the minutes of the two last meetings of Council.

I see you are desirous of seeing the minutes, and as it seems reasonable that the Church should have a copy of them, I forward you the only copy I have. I will be obliged, therefore, if, as you promise, you will return them to me in a few days, or as soon as you conveniently can. I do not, *in toto*, accept Crowell's doctrines; but I see nothing unreasonable in the wish to have the minutes of Council, though I do not see that they will supply, with every distinct step taken in forming the decision arrived at by the Council.

Respectfully yours,

B. H. EATON, Esq., Halifax.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

The following note completes this correspondence:—

Halifax, September 11th, 1867.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I received the minutes, and have taken a copy of them. Please accept my thanks for them. I now return them to you, and hope you will receive them all right.

Yours, &c.,

REV. GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

B. H. EATON.

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL.

FIRST SESSION.

Halifax, August 29, 1867.

An Ecclesiastical Council, mutually chosen by the Granville Street Baptist Church of Halifax, N. S., and the Rev. John Pryor, D.D., and called by the said Church, convened to-day in the meeting-house of the Granville Street Baptist Church, at 11 o'clock, A. M.

The Council was organized by choosing Rev. C. Spurdin, D.D., Moderator, and Rev. W. S. McKenzie, Clerk. The Clerk, with the approval of the Council, chose Rev. George Armstrong to assist him in his duties.

The Scriptures were read, and prayer offered by the Moderator.

The records of the Church relating to the call of this Council were then read, stating the object to be to consider for investigation and adjudication—

1. The charges of immorality, and all testimony having reference thereto, which has been or may hereafter be adduced.

2. The charges of a pecuniary character in the accounts with Miss Vass.

3. The action taken by the Church in reference to each of the above cases.

And to report to the Church their opinion in what degree any, and which, of the charges alleged against Dr. Pryor, have been substantiated before them; and whether the action of the Church relative thereto, and to Dr. Pryor, was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances; and if not, why not; and what course the Church should have adopted

The credentials of Delegates were presented, showing the following brethren to be duly entered as members of the Council, viz:—

Rev. C. Spurden, Fredericton, N. B.
 Rev. J. Davis, Charlottetown, P. E. I.
 Rev. C. Randall, Weymouth, N. S.
 Rev. S. March, Bridgewater, N. S.
 Bro. T. H. Patillo, Liverpool, N. S.
 Bro. Wm. Faulkner, Truro, N. S.
 Rev. I. E. Bill, St. John, N. B.
 Rev. W. S. McKenzie, St. John, N. B.
 Rev. George Armstrong, Bridgetown, N. S.
 Rev. A. S. Hunt, Cornwallis, N. S.
 Bro. James E. Rand, Cornwallis, N. S.
 Bro. A. M. Wheelock, Wilmot, N. S.

The Council then requested of each party to declare whether the Council, as now organized, is accepted. Both parties replied affirmatively: whereupon the Council went into a private session, and agreed upon the following points:—

1. That the Moderator decide general questions of order.
2. That if any special difficulties arise, one, and only one, representative on each side be allowed to plead *pro* and *con*.
3. That anything Dr. Pryor has to say be heard without interruption.
5. That the Council first hear allegations against Dr. Pryor, and that afterwards speeches and pleadings be heard, if deemed necessary.
5. That the chairman can require persons not members of the Council to retire when he thinks it necessary.
6. That when personal evidence cannot be obtained, the Council shall decide whether or not it will accept documentary evidence.

Closed with prayer by Rev. I. E. Bill, to meet again at 2½ o'clock, P.M.

SECOND SESSION.

Halifax, August 29, 1867.

The Council re-assembled at 2½ o'clock, P. M., the Moderator in the chair. Prayer was offered by Rev. Geo. Armstrong. The Council then called for the allegations against Dr. Pryor, to be followed by the testimony thereon.

The Church, through its Committee, offered the following as the first:

FIRST ALLEGATION.—“That Dr. Pryor is guilty of immorality and gross impropriety of conduct in regard to Mrs. Minetta McMillan and Mrs. Rachel Morgan, (formerly Dr. Pryor's servant girl.)”

The Council then went into an examination of witnesses presented by the Church on the above charge.

Mr. James Baxter was called in and gave his testimony, as elicited by the Church, and under a cross-examination by the defendant and by members of the Council.

Adjourned at 6 o'clock, P. M. with prayer by Rev. C. Randall, to meet at 7½ o'clock, P. M.

THIRD SESSION.

August 29, 1867.

The Council convened again at 7½ P. M., with Moderator in the chair. Opened with prayer by Rev. A. S. Hunt.

Mrs. Barbara A. Baxter, wife of Mr. James Baxter, gave in her testimony on the first allegation, as elicited by the Church and under a cross-examination by defendant and Council.

Also James McDonald, Policeman for two years in the city of Halifax, presented his testimony, followed by cross-examination.

The Council then went into a private session, and voted to appoint a Committee of three of their number, to take and report the evidence of Mrs. Maxner, who, on account of sickness, cannot attend the session of the Council: Committee to consist of Revds. John Davis, Geo. Armstrong and C. Randall. Dr. Pryor to take a friend with him to the examination if he pleases, and the Church appoint a representative.

Adjourned at quarter before 11 o'clock, P. M., to meet the next morning at 9½ A. M. Closing prayer by Rev. S. March.

FOURTH SESSION.

Halifax, August 30, 1867.

The Council met this morning at 9½ o'clock, the Moderator in the chair. Opening prayer by Rev. J. Davis. Minutes of the previous session read and approved.

Mr. Lewis Christian, a Policeman of Halifax, gave his testimony before the Council, followed with a cross-examination. Mr. John Hogan, Mr. Charles Twining, Mr. Lewis Hutt (a Police Sergeant), and Dr. Jotham Sewall, also testified against Dr. Pryor, and were cross-examined.

The Council then adjourned, with prayer by Rev. W. S. McKenzie, to meet again at 4 o'clock, P. M.

FIFTH SESSION.

Halifax, August 30, 1867.

The Council, owing to delay caused by the examination conducted by the Special Committee appointed on the evidence of Mrs. Maxner, convened again at quarter before 5, P.M. Prayer by Bro. T. R. Pattillo. The testimony taken from Mrs. Maxner at her residence, was presented by Rev. J. Davis.

Mr. James H. Purdy was also examined, and his testimony cross-examined by the Council and defendant.

Adjourned at 6½ o'clock, P. M., with prayer by Rev. I. E. Bill, to meet at 7½ o'clock, P. M.

SIXTH SESSION.

Halifax, August 30, 1867.

The Council met again this evening at 7½ o'clock. The session was opened with prayer by Bro. A. M. Wheelock. Minutes of the previous meeting read and approved.

Mr. John Forbes gave in his testimony, and was cross-examined. Mr. Archibald Morton, and Mrs. Emma Purdy, wife of James H. Purdy, also rendered testimony before the Council. Other witnesses not being available for this session, the Council closed its open session and went into a private session.

It was voted to receive all the testimony against and for Dr. Pryor on the first charge, together with any pleas by either party on that charge, before passing to the second allegation.

Adjourned, with prayer by Bro. James E. Rand, to meet to-morrow morning at 9½ o'clock.

SEVENTH SESSION.

Halifax, August 31, 1867.

The Council opened its seventh session this morning at 9½ o'clock, with prayer by the Moderator, Rev. C. Spurden, D.D. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

The Council resumed the examination of witnesses presented by the Church.

Mr. Henry Wisdom, carpenter, residing at Dartmouth, testified. Mrs. Morris Manning, also Mrs. Catherine Evans, testified.

The Church then made application to the Council for liberty to present some documentary evidence from Miss Margaret Robinson, deposed before a committee of the Church, not in the presence of Dr. Pryor, but subsequently, together with the rest of the testimony, read to Dr. Pryor. The Council then listened to argument for and against the reception of the testimony, whereupon the Council went into a private session to deliberate upon the above. The Council unanimously decided not to receive the documentary evidence deposed before the committee of the Church by Miss Margaret Robinson.

The testimony on the case of Mrs. McMillan being closed, the Council called for the testimony relative to the case of Mrs. Rachel Morgan, formerly Dr. Pryor's servant girl. On this count in the allegation, Mr. B. H. Eaton, on behalf of the Church, presented written statements made by Dr. Pryor before the committee of the Church. This closed the testimony on the case of Mrs. Rachel Morgan.

The Church at this stage requested the Council to decide on either of the two following points: That the Church be permitted to bring on the case of ——— as a separate and third count in the first allegation; or that in case Dr. Pryor presents evidence of character, they—the Church—be allowed to bring this and other cases, if necessary, as rebutting testimony.

The Council went into a private session on the above request. The following was the decision of the Council:—That the case of * * * be not investigated by this Council: And whereas testimony to character cannot affect the facts of present conduct; therefore, *Resolved*, That the Council decline to receive testimony or evidence as to past character in defence.

At this stage, Dr. Pryor requested the Council to record on their minutes, that while he regretted exceedingly to have the name of * * * revived in connection with any slanderous reports relating to himself, yet he was willing to withdraw all objections to an investigation of the case of ———.

Adjourned, with prayer by Rev. J. Davis, to meet in private session, from 2½ to 3 o'clock, P. M.

EIGHTH SESSION.

Halifax, August 31, 1867.

The Council opened a private session at 2.30 o'clock, P.M., with prayer by Rev. George Armstrong.

The Council weighed the objections urged in the morning against their decision relative to the case of ———, and the character of the defence to be admitted. It was voted to rescind the resolutions passed in the private session in the morning, relative to ——— and the plea of defence, and that the following be adopted instead:—

1. *Resolved*, That the case of * * * * be not investigated by this Council as a part of the allegation.

2. *Resolved*, That Dr. Pryor has a clear right to adopt any line of defence he may deem proper.

3. *Resolved*, That if the Church wish any testimony of a character adverse to the line of defence, the Council reserve to themselves the right to decide to what extent they will hear it.

When in open meeting of the Council the above resolutions were presented, the Church put in the following request, viz:—

That if Dr. Pryor adduce evidence in favor of his past character, the Church be permitted to call upon ——— to rebut the same.

In a private session upon the above, the Council gave the following deci-

sion, viz : The Council decide to defer the reply to that request until after the defence has been heard.

This decision was accepted by the Church. The Council in open session called then for testimony in the defence. Dr. Pryor was called upon by Dr. Crawley to make statements and to present written testimonials in his own behalf.

Dr. Crawley also came before the Council with statements and testimonials in defence of Dr. Pryor, after which Dr. Pryor resumed his own defence before the Council with verbal and written testimony.

Adjourned at 6 o'clock, P. M., with prayer by Rev. A. S. Hunt, to meet next Monday morning, September 2, at 9½ o'clock.

NINTH SESSION.

Halifax, Sept. 2, 1867.

The Council convened for its ninth session this morning at 9½ o'clock. Prayer by Rev. C. Randall. Minutes of the previous session read and approved.

The Church placed before the Council its second charge, which reads as follows :—

That Dr. Pryor is guilty of dishonest and fraudulent dealings in conducting the affairs of Miss Ann Vass, a member of Granville St. Church.

The charge was laid on the table.

Dr. Pryor resumed his defence. Cross-examined by the Church through Mr. Rand. The cross-examination was interrupted by a motion to adjourn to 2½ P.M. Closed with prayer by Rev. S. March.

NOTE.—The Church requested the allegations against themselves to be laid before the Council as soon as convenient.

TENTH SESSION.

Halifax, Sept. 2, 1867.

The Council re-assembled at 2½ P.M. Prayer by Rev. W. S. McKenzie. Minutes of the previous session read and approved, after adding the above note.

A letter was read by the Moderator from Rev. W. S. McKenzie, communicating to the Council, and the parties before the Council, his intention to resign his seat on Wednesday morning next (in case the Council is still in session) owing to obligations of an imperative nature.

Cross-examination of Dr. Pryor, conducted by Mr. Rand, was resumed.

Mrs. Minetta McMillan came before the Council and testified by answering a single question put by the defence. Cross-examined by Mr. Eaton. Mrs. Dr. Pryor testified, and was cross-examined by Mr. Eaton. Also Mrs. Judge Johnston testified.

In private session at 10 minutes before 6 P.M., the Council passed unanimously the following :—

The Council decide, that for weighty reasons which it is not necessary to mention, they cannot entertain the question in relation to ——— in any shape.

Closed with prayer by Rev. J. Davis, to meet again at 7½ o'clock, P.M.

ELEVENTH SESSION.

Halifax, Sept. 2, 1867.

The Council convened at 7½ o'clock, P.M. Opened with prayer by Bro. Wheelock. Minutes of the previous meeting read and approved. Mrs. Mary Crichton testified and cross-examined : also Mrs. Margaret Patterson, and cross-examined. Judge Johnston testified.

In a private session the following decision was pronounced :—

As the Council has now received the testimony from both parties relative

to the first allegation: *Resolved*, That we dispose with pleadings on either side for the present, and proceed to a consideration of the second allegation, which reads thus:—

2. “That Dr. Pryor is guilty of dishonest and fraudulent dealings in conducting the affairs of Miss Ann Vass, a member of Granville St. Baptist Church.

Mr. George Fraser was called to testify, presenting a report embodying the results of an examination conducted by a committee appointed by the Church. Mr. Fraser then read a report made up *ex parte*, subsequent to the suspension of Dr. Pryor from Church fellowship, but occasioned by Dr. Pryor's defence against charges contained in the first report mentioned above. This report was put before the Council under a protest from the defence.

Adjourned at 10½ o'clock, with prayer by Rev. I. E. Bill, to meet again at 9½ o'clock.

TWELFTH SESSION.

Halifax, Sept. 3, 1867.

The Council re-assembled at 9½ o'clock, A.M. Prayer by Rev. C. Spurden. Minutes read and approved.

Mr. Fraser placed before the Council statements respecting the several items of discrepancies in Dr. Pryor's account with Miss Vass. Cross-examined by Judge Johnston. Dr. Pryor laid upon the table his allegations against the Church. The Council then went into a private session. Closed with prayer by Rev. Geo. Armstrong.

[The following are Dr. Pryor's allegations, referred to above:—

1. That the Church showed an unjust, injurious, and uncharitable precipitancy in excluding the Pastor from his pulpit.

2. That they became the accusers instead of the defenders of their Pastor, and conducted the prosecution in a suspicious and unchristian temper, examined witnesses in the absence of Dr. Pryor, and manifested great partiality and prejudiced feelings against Dr. Pryor.

3. That they decided the McMillan case hastily, without the necessary examination of the evidence, and induced the adoption of their resolution on certain assurances, which were afterwards violated.

4. That they were prepared to have condemned Dr. Pryor of fraud in the Vass case on the same evening that the report was introduced,—although the report did not charge fraud,—and were only prevented by want of time and the determined opposition of a few of Dr. Pryor's friends.

5. That they failed in the duty they owed their Pastor, his friends and relatives in the Church, the denomination, and the cause of religion, in not calling a Council in the first instance. But, on the contrary, a Council agreed upon by the Deacons and Dr. Pryor, before the Church had taken any action, was not called in violation of that agreement, by reason of the opposition existing in the Church to the calling of a Council.

6. That after the McMillan case was decided they refused a Council on the Vass case, and justified that refusal on a pretence false, unjust, and dishonorable.

7. That they have since attempted to excuse their dereliction of duty in relation to the calling of a Council by a disingenuous perversion of the truth, and have made the Church books the instrument of perpetrating the falsehood.

8. That throughout their proceedings they manifested disregard to the just rights and dearest interests of their Pastor; and needlessly outraged the feelings of many members of the Church, his relatives and friends, and drove them into secession from the Church.

9. That the final suspension from Church connection of Dr. Pryor, as a member of the Church, was unwarranted by the evidence; and was a needless exercise of authority, besides being wantonly cruel in retaining him under the power of the Church, while deprived of its privileges, and was without warrant in reason or practice.]

THIRTEENTH SESSION.

Halifax, Sept. 3, 1867.

The Council convened at 2½ o'clock. Prayer by Rev. A. S. Hunt. Minutes read and approved.

Miss Ann Vass testified. Cross-examined by Judge Johnston. Mr. Ritchie gave testimony under examination by Judge Johnston. Mr. H. Y. Clarke testified. J. C. Moore testified. Dr. McN. Parker testified. Mrs. Sarah Howard testified. With these closed the evidence in support of the second allegation. The defence first brought forward Dr. Pryor to make a statement of his connection with the affairs of Miss Vass.

Adjourned, with prayer by Rev. C. Randall.

FOURTEENTH SESSION.

Halifax, Sept. 3, 1867.

The Council convened for its evening session at 7½ o'clock. Prayer by Rev. S. March. Minutes of the previous session read and approved.

The examination of Dr. Pryor resumed. Cross-examined by Mr. B. H. Eaton. Mr. Fraser again called upon to give testimony. Professor DeMill read to the Council a document explaining the discrepancies in Dr. Pryor's accounts with Miss Vass. Judge Johnston testified. This closed the examination in the defence.

A private session was held, which was adjourned, with prayer by Rev. C. Spurden, D.D., to meet Wednesday morning at 9½ o'clock.

FIFTEENTH SESSION.

Halifax, Sept. 4, 1867.

The Council convened at 9½ o'clock, A.M. Prayer by Rev. C. Spurden, D.D. The Rev. George Armstrong was appointed Secretary instead of Rev. Mr. McKenzie, who is obliged to leave for St. John.

The Council requests Dr. Pryor to withdraw the charges against the Church, that it may investigate the action of the Church, according to the terms of the following resolution, viz:—"Whether the action of the Church relative to these events, and to Dr. Pryor, was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances; and if not, why not; and what course the Church should have adopted."

Whereupon said charges were withdrawn by Judge Johnston, on behalf of Dr. Pryor. T. H. Rand protests on behalf of the Church against this withdrawal, on the ground that such course is a reversal of the mode of procedure adopted towards the Church.

In private session, the Council decided that evidence in reports of Committees, and on which the action of the Church proceeded, be not now read, but put in.

The chairman decides that the Clerk of the Church proceed to read a statement prepared July 31, 1867, as to the mode in which evidence was taken by the Committee. Judge Johnston protests against the decision. Records as to the action of the Church at several meetings, were read by the Clerk of the Church, B. H. Eaton.

Adjourned, with prayer by Rev. J. Davis.

SIXTEENTH SESSION.

Halifax Sept. 4, 1867.

Council met at 2½ o'clock P. M. Prayer by Rev. Mr. Bill. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. B. H. Eaton clerk of the Church resumed reading record of proceedings connected with the action of the Church, as respects the calling of a Council as recommended by the Association.

Several documents were read to Council by the clerk of the Church.

Dr. Parker, made explanations as regards the agreement come to at the Deacons meeting, May 8th, 1867, to move for a Council.

Judge Johnston, also made statements explanatory as respects the calling of a Council, to consider each charge against Dr. Pryor, and made other statements as to what occurred at the meetings of the Church. Judge Johnston was cross-examined by B. H. Eaton.

Questions put to Judge Johnston by representatives of the Church. "Have those members of this Council who were invited by Dr. Pryor, been entertained during its sittings, at the houses of Dr. Pryor, Prof. DeMill and Judge Johnston?" "Have you detailed to the members of this Council the statements which you have now made?" Judge Johnston deeming these questions impertinent, declined to answer them. Explanations were made by Dr. Parker and Messrs. Beckwith, Rand, and Selden.

T. H. Rand made further statements, explanatory as to the mode of taking evidence in the absence of Dr. Pryor. Mr. R. M. King, gave explanations on matters connected with his own action, and that of the Church.

Mr. Alex. Robinson, and T. S. DeWolf made some remarks.

Adjourned with prayer, by Bro. Hunt.

SEVENTEENTH SESSION.

Halifax Sept. 4, 1867.

Council met at 7½ o'clock P. M. Prayer by the Rev. Geo. Armstrong. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. Alderman Ackhurst made explanations respecting his feelings towards Dr. Pryor, his connection with another Church, and his return to Granville Street Church. Rev. Dr. Crawley as the friend and advocate of Dr. Pryor, read a long address in his behalf. B. H. Eaton then addressed the Council in behalf of the Church.

Rev. Dr. Crawley resumed his address in further defence of Dr. Pryor.

T. H. Rand in behalf of the Church, addressed the Council.

Adjourned with prayer by Rev. S. March.

EIGHTEENTH SESSION.

Halifax Sept. 5, 9½ o'clock A. M.

Prayer by Rev. S. March. Minutes of the last meeting read and approved. The Council in private session, went into consideration of the evidence brought to sustain the 1st allegation against Dr. Pryor.

The resolutions respecting the McMillan and Racheal Morgan cases were passed unanimously during this session.

Adjourned with prayer by Bro. A. M. Wheelock.

NINETEENTH SESSION,

Sept. 5, 2½ o'clock P. M. 1867.

Prayers by Rev. J. Davis. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. The Council proceeded to consider the second allegation against Dr. Pryor, and unanimously passed the decision, which in this case was finally reported to the Church.

The Council then considered the action of the Church, relative to the events referred to, and to Dr. Pryor, and formed their judgment on the points pre-

sented. The Council reviewed its decision on every point without materially changing it in substance or form.

Secretary directed to prepare a copy of the decision for presentation to the Church, at the evening meeting.

Adjourned with prayer by Rev. I. E. Bill.

TWENTIETH SESSION.

Sept. 5, 7½ o'clock. P. M

Decision of Council was transcribed, and about 8½ o'clock presented to the Church by the Rev. C. Spurden, D.D., a preliminary devotional service, in which Revds. C. Randall, J. Davis, and A. S. Hunt, participated, having been held.

The President of Council gave explanations on some points refferred to in the decision read by him to the Church. Short addresses were made by the Revs. J. Davis and I. E. Bill. The doxology was sung, and the Council adjourned, *sine die*.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG, *Secretary*.

The next Church meeting was held September 11th, the minutes of which are as follows :—

September 11th, 1867.

Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of three previous meetings read and approved.

It was moved by Deacon Beckwith, and seconded by Bro. DeWolf, and *Resolved*, That Deacons Nutting and Parker, and brethren Fraser, Rand and the Clerk, be a Committee to examine minutes of Council and evidence, in order to gather any information which might assist the Church in carrying out the recommendation of the Council.

Halifax, Monday, Sept. 16th, 1867.

TO THE PASTOR AND DEACONS OF GRANVILLE ST. BAPTIST CHURCH,
HALIFAX.

I learned with regret this morning, from Mr. Selden, that no notice for a Church meeting during the present week, had been given. It is obviously the duty of the Church to act promptly, on the recommendation of the Council, to reconsider the vote of suspension. The injustice of delay to Dr. Pryor and his friends is palpable; and delay cannot improve, but must deteriorate, the position of the Church in the matter.

In my opinion, it is the duty and interest of the Church, acting in deference to the Council, to rescind that vote; and the more promptly this is done the more graceful the act will be. If, unhappily, the majority are determined to despise the recommendation, it is in their power to do so, but they have no right to keep Dr. Pryor in suspense. It will be unjust, uncharitable, and unmanly to do so. Dr. Pryor desires to have his position defined. I desire to be able to define mine—others may be like me in that respect.

I hope the appointment of a committee on Friday last will not be made an excuse for delay. It surely would be a most uncandid and unworthy excuse.

I request that a meeting of the whole Church be called to consider the recommendation of the Council, on Friday next,—notice to be given at the Wednesday evening meeting, and personally to such as are not then present. I expect to leave town on the Circuit on the Friday after, and I deem it important that I should be present.

I am, yours very obediently,

J. W. JOHNSTON.

I beg to be informed in season of the decision to call a Church meeting.

Bridgetown, September 21st, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR,—It having been necessary for the Rev. W. S. McKenzie, pastor of Leinster Street Church, St. John, N. B., to retire from the Council before its Decision was prepared, he writes me, that having read said document, he authorizes me to affix his signature to said Decision so far as it relates to the allegations against the Rev. Dr. Pryor. You will please, therefore, to affix his name accordingly, in approval of the finding of the Council on the case so far as heard by him, and oblige,

Yours respectfully,

GEO. ARMSTRONG,
Sec'y. of Council.

B. H. EATON, Esq., *Clerk of Granville St. Church, Halifax.*

Tuesday, September 24th, 1867.

Church meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and approved.

Committee appointed at the last meeting reported. After some discussion report adopted. Deacon Nutting did not act on this Committee.

The following resolution was then moved by the Clerk, and seconded by Bro. Paint, and passed:—

The decision of the Council with a copy of their minutes having been submitted to, and carefully considered by this meeting.

Resolved.—That with respect to the recommendation which concludes the decision, the Church regard it as alike due to the Council, and to Dr. Pryor that that recommendation be promptly acted upon, but in approaching the reconsideration which the Council have advised, the Church is sorry to be compelled to say that they do not feel warranted in adopting the findings of the Council as their basis of reconsideration, for the following among other reasons:—

1.—The Council, in framing a moral decision, which, from the great notoriety both of the charges made, and of the vehement denial by the accused of his guilt, must of necessity obtain a very wide circulation, have adopted the formula of the verdict of a jury in a Court of Law, instead of the unequivocal language of a deliverance of a Church Council.

The decision on the first charge reads thus: "that in the opinion of the Council, Dr. Pryor is not guilty of immorality as charged in the Allegation, &c." So positive and emphatic an expression would naturally be understood to convey to the Church, that the Council wished it to believe that the many and suspicious facts extending over a period of three years adduced in support of the charges were explicable by the Council apart from the supposition of criminality; whereas, as publicly explained to the Church, by the President of the Council, it expresses the fact that direct evidence of criminality was wanting.

The decision on the second charge "that the Council acquit Dr. Pryor of dishonest or fraudulent intention, in his dealings as the agent of Miss Vass, &c.," would appear to express the conviction of the Council, that all the evidence in support of the charge, was explicable by them on grounds consistent with honesty; whereas, as publicly explained by the President of the Council to the Church, it means that dishonest and fraudulent intention was not to their minds fully proved.

The decision is not correct in regard to the case of Mrs. Morgan, inasmuch as the Church put in evidence, and the Council received certain statements made by Dr. Pryor to a Committee of the Church, and reduced to writing by them, in terms suggested by Dr. Pryor himself, (see copy of Minutes of Council, 7th Session).

The decision is unaccompanied by the evidence adduced, and does not show how the Council reached their conclusions in the face of the evidence. The Church were anxious to be informed how the facts adduced by them in support of their charges could consist with the absence of guilt.

With respect to the action of the Church, they take this opportunity of saying that the decision is meagre and vague. They asked, "Whether their action was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances; and if not, why not; and what course the Church should have adopted;" and although that action extended over a period of four months, and embraced many important points in Church government and discipline, in regard to which the Church fully expected a definite and guiding opinion, yet only two subjects are mentioned in the decision, viz., the charge of "precipitancy in virtually suspending Dr. Pryor on the occurrence of the unhappy incident in Pleasant Street," etc., and the matter of calling a Council, on one only of which a decision was given. In regard to the former the Council say, "whatever mistakes" the Deacons may have committed, they are not, in view of the suddenness with which their duties devolved upon them, chargeable with want of affection. What mistakes did the Deacons make? The Church wished, and considered themselves entitled to be specifically informed upon this point.

2.—While investigating the charges against Dr. Pryor, the Council, notwithstanding the objections of the Church thereto, adopted the procedure of courts of law, instead of that of advisory Church Councils; but in considering the action of the Church, they reversed their method of proceeding.

The Council would not admit the testimony given and signed by Margaret Robinson, before a Committee of the Church; whilst at the same time they received as evidence from Dr. Pryor and Dr. Crawley, purely *ex parte* documentary testimony in regard to Dr. Pryor's character.

Though conducting their proceedings after the manner of courts of law, the Council denied the Church the right to cross-examine Dr. Pryor or Dr. Crawley in regard to a portion of the former's past life in the ministry, or to adduce certain important rebutting testimony in reference thereto, notwithstanding he and his *advocates* were allowed to testify *ad libitum* with respect to the spotlessness of Dr. Pryor's past life.

Though conducting their proceedings after the manner of courts of law, many of the Councillors were the constant guests of the accused and his advocates.

The Church regret exceedingly that such obstacles stand in the way of taking the decision of the Council as their guide in this grave matter, because the Council laboured long and patiently in their investigations, and because the adoption of the decision would have relieved the Church from a grave responsibility, which they now feel morally bound as a Church of Christ to assume.

On the 30th day of May last, the Church suspended fellowship with Dr. Pryor, until such time as he should afford satisfactory explanation of certain statements apparently confirmatory of the charges then under consideration. The main question now is, whether such explanation has been furnished. After carefully considering all the evidence adduced before the Council, the Church are forced to conclude that it has not been furnished, and therefore they cannot rescind their resolution of suspension, and they see no prospect of any further light being thrown upon the matter.

Considering these things, and the character of the evidence adduced in support of the charge of immorality and impropriety, and Dr. Pryor's conduct during the whole course of the proceedings relating to him, the Church have no course left, but to declare the termination of Dr. Pryor's connection with them as a teacher; and they do hereby withdraw fellowship from him.

A letter was read from Rev. Geo. Armstrong.
Then adjourned.

The Report of the Committee referred to in the foregoing is as follows:

The Committee appointed by the Church to examine the copy of the minutes of the Council and any evidence obtainable by them, with a view of furnishing new facts or considerations (if any) for the information of the Church in carrying out the recommendation of the Council, beg to report that they have been unable to find in the minutes of the Council, and in the minutes of evidence obtained by them, any facts or considerations calculated to explain the difficulties in connexion with the series of pecuniary transactions which have hitherto prevented the Church from entertaining a more favorable consideration of the acts of Dr. Pryor involved in the same.

B. H. EATON, *Sec'y.*
D. MCN. PARKER,
GEORGE FRASER,
T. H. RAND.

Halifax, September 24th, 1867.

On the 25th of September the foregoing resolution and the report of the Committee were forwarded to Dr. Pryor with the following note:—

Halifax, September 25th, 1867.

REV. SIR,—I enclose copy of resolution and report of Committee adopted last evening. These, with the note of a previous meeting appointing said Committee, embrace the whole proceedings of the Church, relating to you, which have taken place since the delivery of the Decision of the Council.

Yours, &c.,

REV. DR. PRYOR.

B. H. EATON,
Clerk Granville Street Church.

October 16th, 1867.

A Church meeting was held after the prayer-meeting. Deacon Selden in the chair. Minutes of previous meeting read and approved. The Chairman stated that the meeting was called to consider the propriety of publishing a record of a part or all the proceedings of the Church relating to Dr. Pryor. After some discussion the meeting adjourned without taking any action.

